

MEMORIES AND OBSERVATIONS
OF
EARLY LIFE IN KANSAS

By

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Energetic youth, with its desire to accomplish things, thinks but little of the yesterdays, while advancing age lives mostly in its memories. That youth so often misses the goal set may be on account of living too much in the present with its comforts, luxuries, and amusements, or by being detracted from its course by some dubious get-rich-quick scheme.

A description of early pioneering in Northeast Kansas seems worth recording as it was similar in many ways to that all over the middle west. Much has been written of early Kansas history; of the slavery and anti-slavery war before it was admitted into the Union as a State; of the bush whacking raids from Missouri, at that time and after the outbreak of the Civil War; of the riotous times in and around Abilene when it was the end of the Chisholm cattle trail from Texas, and of Dodge City when it was the headquarters for the buffalo exterminators, but little of the intimate life of the Pioneers of Northeastern Kansas and their visions.

The northern tier of counties from the Missouri River west to the Blue is generally acknowledged to have been unexcelled for diversified farming, while other parts of the state were seething with local troubles and warfare. As that was my birthplace, I will endeavor to give some of the details of how the pioneers lived and thought at the time, and visualize their surroundings. Anything noted before my years is based on the repeated tales of my elders.

My father often told of how, at the age of twenty-one, he severed home ties in that part of Ireland where the English language had been universal for some time - Westmeath County - and took steerage passage to the New World on one of the slow going vessels of the period. The trip across was a stormy one and they were six weeks on the way. He admitted a longing for adventure and a vision of a better future were the reasons, for his parents were in better financial circumstances than the average, with a

long term lease on twenty acres of farmland. His first work in this country was as a common laborer on the Illinois Central Railroad, which was then being built through that state. Later he became a sectional foreman on construction, always moving on when his section was completed. The men under his supervision were composed mostly of Swedes and Irishmen, with the fun-loving Irish tormenting the quiet Swedes until fist fights at the boarding house were frequent, and occasionally a free-for-all battle. A laughable instance was told of one of these...when his intervention for quieting them had failed and he had retreated to safety, the big Irish landlady came to the rescue with a flatiron in the foot of a woolen stocking and socked participants right and left, regardless of nationality.

In 1858 he quit railroading and crossed the Missouri River on a ferry boat at Westport, Missouri, then a struggling village of one store and blacksmith shop, now the site of metropolitan Kansas City. A pre-emption right of 160 acres of land was purchased for one dollar and twenty-five cents an acre at the northern edge of the Irish settlement of St. Bridget, Kansas, where a colony had located a few years previously. This land was partly in both the Counties of Nemaha and Marshall. There he kept bachelor quarters, occasionally with the company of one of two brothers whom he had induced to make the trip across the sea and were working for the government at Fort Leavenworth.

Another story my father enjoyed telling was of his bachelor days there, and how he outwitted the territorial appointed officers at the county seat of Seneca and saved a younger brother from arrest for participating in a plan of horse thief hanging. The scarcity of horses in that section made them high in price, and with the coming in of a few undesirable characters from the southeastern border, mostly single men, it soon became evident that a horse thief gang was operating. When a valuable mare belonging to a prominent Irish farmer on Turkey Creek had disappeared, the Irish of the St. Bridget country decided it was time to do something. A courier went around on horseback to get recruits, saying that the intention was to kidnap two young men who had recently come into the community and had been associating with the suspects, and threaten to string them up in an effort to make them tell what they knew about the affair. My father had a mind of his own and was not easily led by others, and when he asked the courier if it was the intention to make a thorough job of the hanging and he said "No, just an up and down affair of the third degree to make them talk," he refused to go. He said "That kind of hanging will just get you all into trouble." But a younger brother went along and was said to have been one of those who pulled on the rope. The two young suspects, in reality, only boys, were staying on upper Clear Creek just south of the Irish settlement and everything went off as scheduled, except that after being strung up alternately until they became black in the

face, the boys still refused to talk and were released. As none of the men taking part had worn masks, it was but a short time until county seat authorities began bringing them in, one at a time or in couples. But in that St. Bridget country it was a slow process as there was always a "lookout" and whenever a couple of horsemen leading two saddled horses for the victims were seen approaching, those for whom they were looking disappeared in the near-by woods. Nevertheless, several of the participants had been gathered in and required to give bonds for trial later, before this younger brother was sought. The warrant for him was in the form of a "John Doe." Not knowing his given name, it was for the youngest of the Keegans. As an older brother had recently arrived for a visit, there were three of them out in front of the house when the officers were spied in the distance. Knowing how the warrant read, my father said he conceived the idea of substituting for awhile for his younger brother and advised him to make tracks through the timber for the Nebraska line, less than a mile away, which he did. As the officers came near, my father made a move as though to run, whereupon they galloped up, drew a gun, read the warrant, ordered him on one of the extra horses, and started for the county seat over twenty miles away. They went five miles on the way before he was able to convince them they had the wrong man and they partially got even by compelling him to walk home. All admitted afterwards that it would have gone hard with those captured had not the owner of the mare and a companion, following a recent clue, returned with the animal, having found her at Fort Kearney, Nebraska, hitched to a wagon with another horse, enroute to Salt Lake City with a load of merchandise. This seemed to have a retarding effect on the authorities, for they ceased hunting and dropped all proceedings. Naturally, both young men left the country soon afterwards. It was the general belief that if they had told what they knew they would have suffered as severely at the hands of the horse-thief gang as they did at the hands of the irate farmers.

That they led exemplary lives in another state thereafter was indicated, for they became reasonably prosperous and one of them was elected to represent his district in Congress.

Several hangings of suspects to a finish occurred in that territory later, but one near Seneca, the County Seat, put a quietus on the unlawful practice. It became generally rumored that some of the Territorial appointed officers at Seneca were "hob-nobbing" with the suspects of the horse-thief gang and, probably for effect, the hanging was staged about two miles north of there, on the main traveled highway going down the Nemaha River bottoms. The men officiating took no chances of discovery and were well masked. A wide spreading elm tree with a large limb directly over the road was where the victim was jerked into eternity. The limb was so low that a financially

embarrassed laboring man, on his way to seek work in the country, on horseback and with his head down and sleep still in his eyes, bumped into the legs of the corpse the next morning. It was said of him that his ride on that old spavined nag, as he whipped it back to town to give the news there and along the way-side, would have done credit to a Paul Revere. This, too, was before my time, but I have repeatedly heard James Graney, an old and respected Nemaha River Valley farmer, describe the event in the jocular manner noted. From the twinkle in his eyes as he told of it, I am firmly convinced he knew more of the event than he was telling, but he never seemed to have any regrets. This may have been due to the varied life he had lived before he married and settled down on the farm. He had seen life at its rawest. As a mere boy, he ran away from an unprosperous and unhappy home in Ireland and worked his passage across the Atlantic. He enlisted at the age of sixteen as a drummer boy in the Mexican war and served as an armed government teamster transporting supplies from Missouri River points to the numerous forts between there and Salt Lake City during the Civil War, and for as long afterwards as the Indians menaced travel. Although of Irish birth, there was a strain of English and French blood in his ancestry. He had acquired a humorous way of describing events, and on that account was popular in both country and town, where he was generally referred to as "Uncle Jim."

The people of that period were mostly God-fearing and church-going people, and an ear-splitting oath was seldom heard. In lieu of that, they used such expressions as "By Colly," "By Jiminy," "By Darn," and "By Heck" to express emotion. "By Cracky," an expression all his own, was Uncle Jim's favorite, and when that preceded anything with an accompanying smile, something rare in amusement could be expected. I married a daughter of his, Agnes Graney, and always enjoyed hearing him talk of his experiences as we visited at her home.

The telling of one story always made him sad - it was of purchasing from a fellow teamster for a few dollars a deed to a quarter section of land in Eastern Nebraska and losing the deed before it was recorded. He always declared it was in what was later a select residential district of Omaha. His only son, Jay, continued to live on the old homestead and was much like his father, so much so that in his youth he was often referred to as "a chip off the old block."

My Mother, her parents, four brothers and two sisters, whose names were McCaffrey, also came from that part of Ireland where the English language was spoken. She was but thirteen years of age at this time. The family must have been better off in Ireland than the average, otherwise they could not have undertaken the expense of the trip across the ocean and have money left for a start here. They were all well educated for the period,

the father having taught school there and after coming to this country.

The first stop was in Pennsylvania, where the three eldest of the boys worked in the hot-blast furnaces of the Carnegie steel mills in Pittsburg. Later the family moved to Iowa and engaged in farming, where the two eldest girls married. In the late fifties they ferried across the Missouri River at Rulo, Nebraska, on their way to Kansas, and the father and the three boys old enough pre-empted four good farms on Turkey Creek, Clear Creek Township, Nemaha County, Kansas.

When twenty years of age, Rosa McCaffrey married my father, who was then thirty. For a while their abode was on his farm north of the Irish settlement, but in a short time that was sold and they began improving a better timbered farm on lower Manly Creek, about three miles west of where her brothers had located. Of necessity, all first settlements were along the wooded streams, for from the timber thereon must come the houses, the rails to fence the first small acreages for crop growing, the fuel and most of their furniture. The tools of that time consisted chiefly of an axe, a saw, a spade, a drawing knife, a hatchet, several hand augers, and some iron wedges. A huge slab fashioned with an axe and of two or three inches thickness made the top of the table with holes bored in the bottom wherein to put legs. If the family was large, two slabs were used and joined together with pegs or with cleats fastened underneath. Benches and chairs were made in like manner. Bedsteads were made with the same tools, and small ropes criss-crossed to give the structure some spring. Many of the historical societies of the states are now engaged in looking for some of this early period furniture and consider it of great value. Some had brought along small cook stoves, others relied upon what were called "Dutch Ovens"--the pans much larger than the common bread pan now in use. What was to be baked was put in one of them, covered with the other, put in the open fireplace and covered with hot coals and ashes. Corn bread thus cooked excelled in both taste and flavor that done in a cook stove oven. No one except those who have camped out and roasted potatoes and eggs buried in the coals and ashes of a campfire can appreciate the difference. A suggestion to those venturing on that way of baking is to see that there are no blazing coals and mix enough ashes to insure an even heat, enough to keep from burning. The potatoes will do as nature produced them, but a small hole should be punctured in each egg, otherwise it will blow up.

I was the first arrival, in 1863, of a family that later became five boys and three girls. My first recollections are of a log house of but one room, on lower Manly Creek, chinked between the logs and plastered over the chinks with mud, and roofed with

the split clapboards of the period. The door was also home-made with the proverbial latch and string that hung in or out at will. Two half-sash windows gave light. The cabin and stable, also built of logs and covered with hay, were well sheltered from the north and west winds by heavy timber and surrounded by a tall "worm fence." The word "worm" was used on account of the zig-zag way of the fence. Small stones or blocks of wood were laid under the first layer of split rails, others were then laid end over end and to a height of about five feet. Two stakes were set in the ground over the corners at an angle of about forty-five degrees and a heavy rail or pole laid in the "V" on top. Staked and ridged thus, it was considered "hog tight, horse high and bull strong." Common cattle fences were completed in other manner with from three to four rails.

At that time the Pottawatomic Indians were on a reservation some fifty odd miles southeast of us, and the Otoes about the same distance northwest. The woods in our vicinity were frequently used as a midway camping place by both tribes as they visited to and fro. They were always peaceable but would pick up anything loose that might be lying around. They seemed to have a special desire for chickens which could not always be kept within an enclosure. As a further protection for my mother, when my father was obliged to be away from home, there was a Great Dane dog almost as large as a yearling calf, kept in the enclosure. Although I was quite small at the time, four incidents regarding that dog still stand out clearly in my mind.

The first was how strangers were obliged to "Halloo" to gain entrance and wait if no one of the household were in sight. My playmate, a son of a French couple named LaRivarie living a mile up the stream, lacking a strong voice, would climb on the top of the fence hoping his calls could be more easily heard. He and the dog had previous acquaintance but he did not consider it safe to enter unless some of the family happened to be around.

The second incident worthy of note was on the third day my mother and I were alone, my father having gone with a load of produce to Fort Leavenworth. A few Indians, thinking there was no one at home, were chasing the chickens outside. On hearing the disturbance, my mother went out of the house and let the dog out of his kennel. Had she turned him out of the enclosure there would have been at least one lacerated Indian. As it was, the racket he made inside caused them to beat a hasty retreat.

The third incident was on a Sunday when a neighboring family with a big mastiff of about the same size as our dog came to visit us. While we were engaged with the midday meal, the two dogs got into what would evidently have been a death struggle if they were not parted. On hearing the noise, both families rushed out to the rescue, each of the men beating his

dog with a club when he could get near enough to the combatants to feel safe and yelling at them to stop. Each of the dogs, however, were so busy trying to get a strangle hold on the other's throat that he paid no attention to the clubbing and their growls and snarls were so frequent and loud that they could not hear the commands. When it looked as though all efforts at parting them were futile, and the women were on the verge of tears, father had a happy thought. He ran to the well nearby, quickly drew a bucket of cold water and dashed it on the two heads that seemed to be fastened together for keeps. This so surprised them that they let go of their holds and quit snarling long enough to hear the commands of their masters, which they usually obeyed.

The fourth occurrence took place a couple of years later as my father with his team and wagon loaded was leaving for another trip to the Fort. The dog, who was loose outside the yard at that time, decided to follow in spite of commands to the contrary. Father descended from the wagon and, getting a heavy stick nearby, undertook to compel obedience. For the first time he failed and when they drew near together, the dog made a sudden lunge, and standing on his hind feet, made a grab at the throat of my father as he made a missing stroke with the club and almost fell backwards. The dog then retreated, but later had to be killed on account of his age and continued viciousness.

When the home surroundings were finished the next move was the grueling work of clearing some of the brush land for cropping, as it was known to be the most productive. Small trees and saplings were grubbed out, hazel-brush was cut off at the ground and all refuse burned. The breaking up of this land was done with a stout walking plow and oxen the motive power. Nearly everyone owned one horse of a kind and some owned more, but oxen, broken and matured, were much lower in price and more serviceable for this kind of work. Unlike a horse, they were not high-spirited, did not develop balky antics, and slowly forged ahead regardless of the severe strain of the pull. The process of making a team was to pick out the two most likely looking calves, yolk them together and teach them to respond to "Get-up!" "Gee!" "Haw!" and "Whoa!" No reins were used but a good whip to crack alongside their head when a turn was demanded as necessary. The first team broken was invariably named Tom and Jerry and they were always put in the lead when two teams were needed.

At first, hay was cut with a scythe and small grain reaped with a "cradle," a scythe of a kind with a light upright post at the lower end of the "snath" and cross fingers the shape of the blade. A steady rhythmic motion of the wielder clipped the grain and the "fingers" held it in an upright position until the half-circle swing deposited it in a neat row at the left of the worker. A man followed each cradler with a light wooden hand rake to divide into bundles and bind. As he stooped for the

bundle, the handle of the rake was rested on his shoulder. Three acres was the maximum days work for the two men. Until threshing machines came into the country the grain was "flailed" out and winnowed by hand. The bundles of grain were stacked or stored in the granary until needed. Two sticks about the size and length of pitchfork handles with a leather hinge connecting them made a flail. The wielder, gripping one of the sticks firmly in both hands, used a swinging motion back, up and down with force enough to thresh out the grain, which, in small quantities, was placed on a granary floor or a large canvas spread on the ground. After this, in order to separate the grain from the chaff, it was gathered in a large basket and when there was a reasonable wind, was held high up and slowly sifted out. The wind caused the chaff to blow away, leaving the grain clear on another canvas. This we called "winnowing." Small grains were sown by hand and corn dropped by hand was covered with a hoe and cultivated with one horse and a double shovel cultivator.

A few years later a primitive horse drawn harvesting machine was put on the market. There were several in the neighborhood who cut their own grain with them and their neighbors' for hire. This was inducive to the sowing of more small grain. Having an over-supply of hayland, seventeen acres of low lying bottomland was broken up and sown to wheat the next year. That happened to be an unusually wet one and had labor been taken into consideration, there would not have been any profit in the crop. But work then was the cheapest commodity in existence. A cold rainy spring gave the weeds such a start that after it quit the wheat could not be seen, but perseverance saved the situation. All of our own family able to pull weeds and a hired man were put at the job of pulling them. Altogether we made a swath to and fro across the field about a rod in width. The weeds were so numerous that when backs became stiffened one could get down on his knees for a change and make as much headway as in standing. It began raining again at harvest time and when the horses and harvesting machines bogged down three men who could use the "cradles" cut it. It was a fascinating sight to me to watch them, three in a row, as they encircled the field, and the binders with their rakes following. Although quite small, I learned to maneuver the light implement under their directions while they took short rests. The maximum out for one man was three acres.

The harvesting machine to succeed the cradle was known as "the dropper." It was simply a moving machine with slats back of the cutting bar and a revolving reel to knock the grain thereon as it was cut by the sickle. By a foot treadle the operator held the slats at enough angle to hold the grain on as it fell. When he thought there was enough for binding a bundle, a release of the foot pressure let the grain slip off the slats, and a clamping down again raised them to receive the next bundle. As the tramping

by the horses and the running of the wheels of the machine in the next round of cutting would thresh out too much of the grain, it had to be bound immediately. If the grain was thick and heavy on the ground, it took six men to bind and keep the machine running. The outside of the field was measured by stepping around it and six "stations" assigned to the men. After every round of the machine each man, as he bound, moved forward to the next station. Some of the men became such experts at binding that they stopped just long enough at a bundle to pull out enough straw to make a band, grab up the bundle and tie it in their stride.

The next development in harvesting machinery was what was called "the self rake." It consisted of a large half circle platform at the rear of the cutting bar and rakes inserted in light board and blank boards. The blank boards and those with rake teeth were interchangeable and rakes used depended on the thickness of the growing grain. All were operated by rollers working on a half circular tract just to the right of the drivers seat. As they gyrated around, a person watching from a distance expected the driver to be hurled from his seat, but the machine did its work well. The blank boards tossed the grain in an even keel on the front of the platform, not touching that fallen; the boards with the teeth in them did the same and with the extended teeth swept the platform, but after passing that, attained a perpendicular position, thus missing the driver. The advantage of that machine over the dropper was that all grain was swept aside so that the team and the machine would not be obliged to pass over the grain in cutting the next swathe. Also, the grain could be bound into bundles at leisure.

Following these came the "Marsh harvester," where the fallen grain was deposited on a platform attached to the machine and two men standing did the work that five or six did following the "dropper." Then came the "self binder" and later the modern "combine", that cuts, threshes and delivers the grain into a wagon box.

As the increase from the first few cows became material, better hay machinery than the scythe became a necessity and much of the purchase price was derived from the sale of butter made at daily intervals during the summer. The homely method of preservation was to pack it in half-barrels buried to within a few inches of the rim in cellars and covered with a strong salt brine, where it awaited the annual fall trek by wagon to Fort Leavenworth, the only market. A mowing machine was the first purchase, but it took such an outlay that there was nothing left for a horse rake. Ingenuity came to the rescue and a homemade one was built, all of wood. A small log or, better said, a large pole with two inch holes bored in it about six inches apart was used. Into these, hard wood teeth, eight or ten feet in length, were driven, centered, and sharpened to a point at the ends. A frame was built around

this with a wooden boxing on each side for the pole to revolve. A team was hitched to the front and a raised handle bar placed in the rear for the operator's use in guiding and dumping. As the pole moved along the stubble the teeth in front caught their load. When full, a slight upward tilt of the handle bar caused the points to catch in the ground and dump, and the teeth to reverse so that the empty ones were in the front ready to catch another load. Operating a rake of this kind in heavy bottom land hay taxed the energy of one man and fully absorbed all his attention.

In the meantime, my father had spent his spare time for several winters cutting down tall cottonwood trees and hewing two sides down to a thickness of about sixteen inches in preparation for an addition to the first, modest log cabin. He was an expert with the axe, could chop either right or left handed and always hit where he intended. When enough logs were "snaked" into the farmyard with horses or oxen, there was a "log raising." It was always a jolly occasion, with neighbors coming from near and far to help skid up the heavy logs and saddle and notch the ends for close fitting, with their wives as companions for the hostess and to prepare a dinner suitable for the occasion. When completed the two houses combined made the largest log structure in that part of the state. When others replaced their log cabins with commodious frame buildings, ours seemed too good to destroy and was given a modern appearance by weatherboarding outside and plastering within, and the addition of a frame kitchen and porches.

As there were no railroads at that time west of the Missouri River, a market for surplus farm products was a serious problem. Wheat could be sold for around a dollar a bushel on being hauled to Fort Leavenworth or Missouri River points, but there was no market for the surplus corn, consequently, corn meal, cooked in its various ways, was almost a regular thing as the foundation for food. At first, and for several years after the Civil War, the so-called luxuries were beyond reach. A substitute for coffee was made by cutting potatoes into small squares and roasting to a dark brown in the oven. Wheat also was browned likewise and both ground together finely in the old fashioned hand-powered coffee mill. The flavor of the drink produced was much like the widely advertised substitutions for coffee of later years. Much of the sweetening for coffee and wild fruit preserves was sorghum.

In ingenuity those "Old Timers" were close rivals of Robinson Crusoe. When a sorghum mill was needed and the far-off factory product was beyond means, a local handyman made the rollers out of hard-wood with short oblong pegs driven tightly into the chiseled out holes in the rollers for cogs. The owner of the mill moved over the community to wherever the farmers had enough cane piled up to justify a setting, ground out the juice and boiled it down in large pans over a wood fire, and delivered it to them for

a share of the product, which he sold to compensate him for his work. Occasionally some mill owner gave notice that on a certain night a pan of the sorghum would be reduced to the candy stage and invited the youth of the community to attend a candy pulling. When rightly cooked for that purpose it is of a rather dark color. It was then ladled out on plates for a sufficient cooling and pulled, with the hands well greased with butter to keep the molasses from sticking to them. The longer it is pulled, the lighter it becomes and there always was rivalry as to who could get the nearest to a yellowish beeswax color and twist and fashion it into the best looking pattern before it completely cooled and hardened. While waiting for the sorghum to become thoroughly cooked, the young of both sexes whiled away the time with "drop the handkerchief" and other school games of a like nature and singing the songs popular at that time.

The mothers' work seemed never done, for aside from the milking, buttermaking, and other household duties, there were ducks or geese to pick, so that the beds would be more comfortable with the feathers, and during the long winter evenings it took a lot of knitting to give the family a full supply of socks. Our elders wore shoes the year round for the sake of convention, but, for a saving in shoe leather, those of the younger generation had to be discarded upon the first spring thaw, not to be donned again except on rare occasions until winter freezing. It was tough on the youngsters at first, but before the summer was half over, the soles of their feet became so calloused that walking on rough pebbles or broken glass gave little discomfort.

Boys' clothes for every day were home-made blue denim trousers with "galluses" made of the same material, and "hickory" shirts. Girls also wore blue denim dresses on week days, with a change to a brightly colored woolen material called "linsy" for church or visiting. The boys visiting apparel was blue denim home-made overalls. There was quite a leaning to the coarse, scratchy, red, woolen undershirts. Claiming that what would keep out the cold would also keep out the heat, many wore them as a chest covering all summer long. With sleeves rolled up and the collar wide open, they made something of a picture. It is probable that they were worn more for vanity than for comfort.

I was in my early 'teens before I acquired my first shoddy and ill-fitting store suit.

The light on the long winter evenings was the flickering tallow candle, made at home in molds designed for that purpose. When the supply of tallow ran out, lard was put in a tin pie plate and a strip of cloth laid therein for a wick, with one end of it extending over the edge for lighting. This made even a dimmer light than the candles. Later coal oil lamps began to come

into use but the dull red glow from the wicks was little better than the candles. It was, however, some time before they came into general use. The refining process had not then been perfected enough to take all of the gasoline out of the oil and occasionally a lamp would blow up, which caused many to fear their installation. Since it has been properly refined, the term "coal oil" has been replaced by the word kerosene.

The wives seldom went to town then, one or two times a year at the most. The trip over the rough roads in the jolting lumber wagon, drawn by the slow-going, over-worked horses, was not an exciting prospect. But they always welcomed the itinerant peddlers with their packs, and in the summertime they were numerous. With the social contacts limited to their families and possibly one or two neighbors, it was a pleasant diversion to see new faces and hear someone from the outer world talk. The peddlers were usually foreigners, Irish, Germans and Jews, who had learned their trade in the Older Countries, with an accent to the English language that was pleasing to listen to and proficient in their line of address. Some carried packs on their backs as bulky as a washtub, shawls, fine linens, and many other things. Shawls were the only extra outdoor garments worn by women at that time, and the best bargains carried by the peddlers. Some of them were of exceptional quality and offered so cheaply that I afterwards came to the conclusion that they were stolen by an organized gang in some eastern city and shipped to what, in gangster language, is called a "fence" in Kansas City or St. Joseph, then outskirts cities of civilization, and there purchased by the peddlers. Other than this, the men did all the buying, even to the family wearing apparel. When a new supply of footwear was needed on the approach of winter, the eldest child was backed up against the wall with the heel of one bare foot on the floor and against the base log. There the measurement in length was taken by inserting a small piece of wood underneath the foot and cutting it off at the end of the forward toe. This procedure was carried on down the line with the others, and the accumulated measurements taken to town by the head of the family. In purchasing, an allowance was made for the needed width. If the boy or girl was of school age, coarse heavy boots were selected instead of shoes, as they were to be preferred to shoes in tramping through deep snow. That they might endure longer, the leather on the shoe at the toe was protected with a brass tip. Overshoes had not yet been invented, but the young feet were accustomed to the cold, and they were sent to school regardless of the zero weather and seldom suffered from frost bites. The men also wore cowhide boots and heavy home knitted socks, but when out all day in below zero weather caring for stock or chopping firewood, they were not enough protection and it was necessary for them to get some old sacking or other cloth to wrap and tie around the boots to help keep out the cold. Rubber overshoes did not make their appearance until much later.

Boys' work at home and the wildness of the surroundings acted as a hardening process for taking punishment, and they gloried in it. It was not uncommon to see a couple of youngsters pommeling each other with bare fists until the blood flowed, just for sport. Other competitive sports at first were quite primitive. The Bible story of David and Goliath suggested the leather sling, the Indians, the bow and arrow and the throwing of light hatchets in lieu of a tomahawk. With a smooth let-go of the hatchet handle, it was learned that at ten short steps it would make exactly two revolutions and the blade would sink into the object thrown at with a precision that surprised on-lookers. As more settlers arrived, competitive baseball teams were easily organized. "Side-hold" wrestling, with its grapevine, hiplock, and other throws, was popular. The young athletic sheriff of the county, Bill Dennis, held the championship and took on all comers. When a new contestant appeared and a match was arranged between them, it drew a large crowd of the male population. But the most looked-forward-to events were the Fourth of July, the annual advent of the wagon circus in county seat towns, and the neighborhood three or four days "Camp Meeting," when people came from afar to camp at the woodland site and remained the entire week's session. There were rustic benches for the audience, a mourners' bench in front of the pulpit for the penitent to kneel by and straw for them to kneel on. Ministers dwelt at length upon the beauties of the hereafter in heaven and the horrors of that burning hell of fire and brimstone below. Their sermons were effective, especially among the women, who were inclined more to religion than the men. In that period love of husband and family, and grief after the death of some loved one, were the principal emotions experienced by women, and they were ready subjects for the implanting of religious enthusiasm.

The custom in all denominations at that time was to keep a serious countenance and refrain from levity before and after services. With the existing conditions, the women welcomed the coming of the Camp Meeting on account of the chance for social intercourse, and usually gave pent up emotions full play. They were a great help to the ministers when the climax of their talks had been reached and a fervid appeal was made to the wayward to come forward and kneel at the mourners bench, repent, and be saved. Numbers of them, old and young, would circulate among the audience, fairly dragging husbands, brothers, sons, and sweethearts that way. Like the dramatic sermons of the later Billy Sunday, they were effective to a class of people that could not be moved by any other method. They were the forerunners of the spectacular Evangelistic sermons, when churches became more spacious, that appeared a few decades later.

My mother fully understood the temptations of youth and their reactions under punishment, and was firm in the conviction

that a reasoning talk was more effective than the rod. It is due to her teachings that none of us eight ever landed in jail, became drunkards, or otherwise disgraced her. Until the ravages of hard work and advancing age began to tell on her, she was beautiful of feature, with the long black hair peculiar to many of the Irish, that was as wavy as any of the modern marcelled.

I might have been the equal of "Peck's Bad Boy," had the curbing process been of a harsher nature. Two or three incidents indicate this. The first was when an apple peddler from Missouri was traveling through the country with a team and wagon, selling apples, with a fancy apple extended high up on a pointed stick on each side of the wagon as an advertisement of his wares. Arriving at our home in the dusk of the evening, he asked the privilege of putting up for the night, which was granted. After the evening meal was over, he treated the family to an apple each. They were such a rarity that one only whetted my appetite for more, and after eating mine, I suggested to my brother that we purloin a few from the wagon after dark and hide them. This we did, but the apple peddler had been outside the house at the time, saw us, and reported the theft to our parents the next morning. My punishment was having to go out and get the apples and return them to the owner, and a motherly talking to as to where the habit would lead if continued.

Later, a boy of our own age, while bathing with companions in the Nemaha River, was drowned and all the small boys in our neighborhood were notified by parents to stay out of the water. I failed to see the necessity of this as the deepest holes in our vicinity only came to our necks, but there were long stretches of them, and we continued to slip away and enjoy the water. The climax came when on returning one evening, mother noticed the shirt of my brother was on inside out and I was slated for a lecture on disobedience, and much peeved at my easy-going brother because he had not put his shirt on properly. My punishment, besides the lecture, was being sent to bed without supper. I can still vividly recall when this occurred, how, after considering it for a while from my mother's point of view, I decided I had done wrong and sobbed until my heart appeared to be at the breaking point. But she was wise in her ways with children and when she thought I had mental punishment enough, she would come to the bedside and cuddle me, all the while talking soothingly. Had she ignored my anguish, it is probable that it would have finally turned into resentment and the effects of the punishment lost.

As I grew older, the punishment for misbehavior was confinement in a locked cellar, with two small oblong frames to give circulation of air. To keep the dogs out, there were upright pegs or rods of hard hickory wood perpendicularly placed and fastened above and below in holes bored before the frame was inserted high up in the stone wall. They admitted but little light, and one day,

after being put there in the forenoon, boylike, I decided to be a jail-breaker, get out and run away and become a wild man of the woods, living on plums, nuts, and berries. Having an old rusty penknife in my pocket, I rolled an empty barrel under the window, turned it on end, and standing thereon, tackled those bars and was whittling on the one that gave promise of an outlet, when my mother came to release me for the mid-day meal. When I was finally let out, I quietly slipped away to the woods without waiting to eat. But when the pail of advancing night came, I decided that was no place for me, and also that fruits and nuts do not make a complete meal for a hungry boy. I went home penitent, and again, my mother was wise, for she did not mention my misbehavior and, although the evening meal was over, cooked me a nice supper. Had she met me with a frown and a severe lecture, I probably would have resented it and again run away, regardless of consequences. Neither of my parents believed in harsh bodily punishment. They were inbred with the idea that it was liable to foster stubbornness in children as it does when tried on a high-spirited balky horse in an effort to make it go.

My father seldom went to church, but my mother was a regular attendant, when the weather was permissable, and insisted we children who had attained the years of understanding accompany her. The one we attended was about eight miles distant. The road was over a rolling, hilly country and the method of conveyance was in a lumber wagon. The majority of wagons were made at a combined blacksmith and wagon shop in the County Seat, and were so expensive that a spring seat to ride thereon was usually not included in the ordering. The horses attached were mostly in idleness during the winter season, thus making them frisky. Often the start was made early in the morning with the thermometer close around or below the zero mark. For protection from the cold the upper sideboards were left on. In getting ready for the start, one of us boys hung onto the bridle of the most fractious horse while the other seated on a board laid across the wagon box hung onto the lines. We boys could clamber up on the wheels, but my mother and sisters were obliged to have a chair placed beside the wagon to ascend. When this was accomplished, they were soon seated on chairs set in the rear end of the box and safely wrapped in comforters. The wonder is that we never had a real runaway on one of those trips, although we often came near to it. The cold made the horses jump and prance until the strain on the lines became so great that the hands became benumbed, and we two older boys took turns in endeavors to control them.

Seven miles north of us, in Nebraska, there was a tributary of Turkey Creek called Johnson Creek, coursing from west to east, as did those in Kansas. Early preemption rights to one hundred and sixty acres were purchased by pioneers. When the Homestead Act was passed, the prairie land between the creeks was taken up. Many of these homesteaders had come with only a

team and wagon and just enough money and personal belongings for existence. They arrived early in the spring, excavated a hole in the side of a hill, fronted it with sod, rough boards or stone, and plowed up eight or ten acres, putting in garden truck and sod corn. Their winter's fuel was rustled from the few tracts of non-resident speculators timberland still remaining on Turkey and Manly Creeks. Upon their arrival, the farmers just across the line in Kansas were obliged to have their cattle herded lest they make a raid across the line into Nebraska which, unlike Kansas, had a herd law. This duty was delegated to the children and the herds ranged from fifty to seventy-five head, herded on the open range of the old homes, including ours, which were looked after by a younger brother and me, and the others by the children of the parents owning them. Sometimes there would be six or seven herding in the same vicinity.

A man by the name of Thacker, living just across the line in Kansas, was our dread, as he left his few acres of crops unfenced and as soon as any cattle came on his land he would corral them and it took a ten dollar bill to get them released. He possessed only two cows but had a large corral in which to impound his neighbor's. Childlike, when our herd was quietly grazing or lying down resting, we would consider it safe to leave them for a short while and go over a hill or into a nearby draw to pick plums or nuts. If, on returning, a dozen or more cattle were streaking it for Thackers, there was no use in trying to catch up, knowing he would soon have them corraled. I always wept large tears of remorse on my way home because I knew my father would have to quit his work and ride over there and pay ten dollars to release them. But those homesteaders were not all like Thacker. Some were so conscientious that they bought wood rather than rustle it and would make an effort to turn stray cattle back.

Some idea of the social training of the Thacker family can be conceived from the actions of the oldest son, then over twenty years of age, who worked for us a short time one summer. On account of the limited space inside the cabin, the wash bench was just outside. Naturally we all gave our faces a good scrubbing before meals, using both hands, but he was so indolent that he used but one in his ablutions.

Later, Thacker and the other ne'er-do-wells were obliged to sell out to people from east of the Missouri River, who had money, energy and stamina, and they moved on to greener pastures.

We sometimes grazed the cattle south of our creek where it took less herding, but when a gushing rain came up suddenly, the creek became a raging torrent and not all the milk cows with calves at home would brave it. Another drawback to pasturing

there was that the yearlings would mix and stray with some of the herd from Clear Creek, and the next day would stray farther away.

About that time, several of the men from that section equipped a covered wagon with what was needed for a buffalo hunting trip, taking along saddle horses for the chase. Their route was the California trail and they expected to get their game a short distance beyond the Blue River. In some manner, two of the party became separated from the others and their camp. At that time, the Indians in southern Kansas were resenting the extension of the Union Pacific Railroad and the killing of the buffalo on what they considered their hunting range. They were attacking wagon trains along the old Sante Fe Trail near Dodge City, Kansas, and murdering the settlers in that section, and were reported planning to advance northward. Having heard of this, and that the Otoes on their reservation about sixty miles northeast, just north of where they were hunting, were also getting ready to go on the war path, the lost hunters started for home seeking protection as soon as possible along a western tributary of the Blue. With the absence of small game on the trail, they suffered with hunger and were obliged to kill and cook a small dog that had been trailing them. One of the two had a young son about my age attending the home school, and he gave a full and vivid report of it as heard when "Pa was telling Ma," even to repeating the fact that the last meal before gaining the safety zone was soup made from the dog's tail, and "Pa" had never eaten anything that tasted better.

The report that the Otoes contemplated going on the warpath created quite a scare in the Irish Colony of St. Bridget. A courier on horseback was sent around to the outskirts to warn the residents there and advise them to come in that night with their families and stay at a large house near the middle of the settlement and bring whatever firearms they had with them. My father, who was then alone, did not go, claiming that he would be harder to find than if he joined the party camped in the middle of the settlement, which would evidently be the first place of attack. The first night was spent in careful waiting and watching, but as the second night waned, the stillness became oppressive, and stacking what few old muskets they had in a lean-to of the building, both men and women proceeded to have a hilarious time. Merriment was at its height when a dog belonging to one of those therein got lonesome for his master, jumped through a window of the lean-to. The crashing glass made so much noise that there was instant panic among the merrymakers and wild cries of ... "The Indians! The Indians are upon us!" Later it was proved the report of an uprising among the Otoes was a false one. They were always peaceably inclined toward the whites.

Government troops soon routed the marauding Cherokees in

Central Kansas and drove them back to their reservations. The other hunters with the wagon arrived home a few days later with two buffalo hides and meat to their credit. I had a chance to taste some of it but those killed must have been very old for the meat was almost as tough as leather.

Life then was not unsavory to those with courage and a vision of a better future. Ready money was not always available, but that virgin country produced the wherewithal to live in reasonable comfort and was beautiful to look upon as well. Wild strawberries and gooseberries could be picked by the bucketfull and the wild grapes were so plentiful that wine could be made by the barrel if desired. Plums as large and delicious as the tame cross-bred varieties of the later days were abundant. Shell bark hickory and hazelnuts could be stored by the bushel and black walnuts by the wagon load. Honey bees were numerous in the woodlands and by watching their lines of flight and following it, their storehouse, which was usually high up in a hollow of some tree, could be located. The method of securing their store of honey was to burn sulphur at the base of the tree to quiet them, then with cross-cut saw and axe, fell the tree. The many branches in breaking always left the body a few feet from the ground. Under this enough sulphur was burned to stun the bees, and with the same tools an entrance was made to their storehouse. The largest supply we ever gained was a large washtub full of honey in the comb. There were, however, two swarms storing there and, for lack of room, one had evidently picked out another location, for it suddenly left upon the burning of the first sulphur. A few people are immune to bee stings, even when in the act of robbing their store, and anyone can handle them in the swarming process without being stung.

In flying to a picked out future home the motion is a rotary one and not so fast but what persons, by running, could keep up with them on the prairies as they flew from one timbered creek to another--something like the speed of the many whirlwinds seen in the springtime. There was a prevalent idea at the time that if enough noise was made under them when on the wing, they would alight and could be hived for home use. One day I was cultivating something a short distance from our timberline and heard an unusual racket that at first could not be accounted for, but was soon explained as a large swarm of bees overhead, with all of a family from a mile and a half northeast of us underneath ringing cowbells and beating on dishpans and other household wares and almost out of breath. They, however, failed in their efforts and were obliged to quit pursuit as the swarm flew high over nearby timber. In time, bees became so numerous that they started stores in the boxed in eaves of the frame houses where they entered through a knothole, and occasionally their home was located between the weatherboards and the plastering of some house.

While on the bee subject, and having told of the nice things

connected with the honey bees, it seems a good time to include the bumble bee. They were not as plentiful as the honey bees but their size was much larger and their stings worse to take. Their homes were in holes in the ground in grassed over lands and their nests, as we called them, usually contained from ten to twenty of the species. Their make of honey was unpalatable, for besides using the flowers, they were often seen adding to it from dead and decaying animals. Their nests were numerous in eighty acres of bottom hayland on the home place, and they were more than a nuisance as it was being cut. Sometimes as many as two or three nests would be encountered in a swathe as the machine made the rounds. At least one would sting the driver, for all his exertion was needed to keep the horses from running away, as the bees also stung them. When a crisis like the foregoing developed, the machine was moved to another location for the remainder of the day and preparations made for their extermination. If the nest consisted of but a few, for the sport that was in it, my brother and I made light wooden paddles to give them battle, but did not always emerge victorious and unscathed. If there were many of them, a gallon jug with a little water or coal oil in it was set nearby in the night time, and the peculiar noise it made when the wind blew attracted them to investigate and when they went in, they seldom came out again.

There were hornets nests hanging from limbs in the timber, but unless some mischievous boy threw rocks at them or otherwise tried to destroy them, they seldom went on a rampage. One of the largest ever seen was directly over a cowpath where our cattle trailed through the timber. It was in the shape of an inverted balloon, and the lower end as large as a small washtub. Many times I passed underneath without a thought of the nearness of the dynamite overhead, but later, without any visible reason, one of them stung me fairly on the forehead. The feeling, besides being very painful, was as though coming from a hammer and it was staggering. After I recovered, I was rather glad the incident had happened as nothing like it had ever been experienced.

Another time, when a number of us were working out a new road through the timber, we came in contact with a bunch of yellow jackets. Their homes are found underneath and in decaying tree stumps. A nest was encountered as we plowed around one of them. Their sting has an effect much like that of the honey bee and they soon put us on the run. An uncle working nearby, with a plentiful supply of hair and whiskers, came forward to investigate the cause, and when told, remarked - "I'll show you how to get rid of them." Breaking off a small leafy branch of a hickory sapling, he began the attack by swishing it at them. But we had hearty laughs at his expense. There were too many for one man to battle in the ordinary way, and he also took to the brush, clawing crazily at his hair and beard with both hands in an effort to dislodge those that had become entangled there.

Dame Nature also supplied chewing gum to the youth in the tall flowering rosin weeds that grew so abundantly on the prairies. In the late summer a dark thick liquid would ooze out of these weeds around the tops and cling there until it became a hardened light colored gum. Then it was gathered for immediate use and the surplus stored in small tin boxes for use in the late fall or winter. It had a better and more lasting flavor than the widely advertised manufactured product of today. It is impossible to fully describe the beauty of the country as seen by the first arrivals. In the summertime there were wild canaries, redbirds, humming birds and a score of other varieties too numerous to mention. The "Bob White" call of the quail was frequently heard, and the turtledoves cooed to each other of mornings in rivalry to the coarser notes of the prairie chickens. The woodland had its special flowers, prominent among which were the tall Sweet William. The prairie also had its quota, with roses predominating. The prairie chickens flew around in great droves in search of food in the winter time and could be trapped easily. A short walk would route a covey of quail, and rabbits and red squirrels were plentiful.

Deer of the short-tailed species were plentiful until the winter of 1872 and 1873, which marked the completion of the St. Joseph and Grand Island Railroad. Then a number of accredited sportsmen came up from St. Joseph with horses, guns, and hounds and ran them all out of the country. It was a pitiful sight to see the frantic creatures, usually a buck, a doe, and a fawn, jumping the high rail fence and cutting across fields, with the baying pack a half-mile behind, the sports on their horses on some distant elevation watching.

In the springtime the small red bud trees with their crimson blossoms vied with the white of the plum trees in contrast of color, for a fringe on the heavier wooded green along the streams. In the autumn there was a wide variation of colors in shades of green and yellow with the blood red leaves of the sumac and ivy standing out prominently in relief. Such an environment would have made a wonderful park.

A birds-eye view of the surrounding country then would have shown two streams, Manly and Clear Creek, flowing from west to east, only three miles apart, with bottoms on the north sides and high hills and deep gulleys on the south sides, and a narrow prairie strip between. On the hills were stunted scattered oaks interspersed with short grasses. The gulleys were well wooded and together they made a natural habitat for deer. The heights were used as observation points to look for enemies and the brushy timbered gulleys a refuge when they were spied in the distance. With the exception of about a mile up from origins, where the flow of the streams was rapid, they were banked by even heavier and older looking trees than were the rivers. One,

a few rods west of the house, a monstrous oak was so old that all the upper branches had decayed and fallen, leaving the large limbs sticking out dead, bare and ghost-like. The main body was supported by a few green lower limbs, but on account of its being only the length of one post-cut, it survived a long time. No thought was made of measuring the circumference or of counting the number of circles on the stump or butt when felled which denotes age, but some idea of its immensity in its prime can be gained from the fact that, when finally felled, that one cut made an even hundred large fence posts. Another, a mammoth black walnut, still healthy and growing, did not even promise a post-cut and was a long survivor. Large fan-like limbs springing from near the base gave the top the appearance of a circus tent when in leaf. It was a great producer of nuts and in autumn the ground underneath was covered with them to depths of from four to six inches.

The oak mentioned, with its upper barren limbs, was the roosting place of numerous black vultures then present in that part of the country and feeding on carrion. We called them buzzards and with their bare necks and heads they were repulsive to look upon. They were found only in the wilderness or semi-wilderness areas of the country and disappeared with the advancement of man and his laws for disposing of the dead animal before it became putrid. In the springtime the farmers cattle that roamed at large, found the earlier grasses in the timbered areas along the streams and in crossing to and fro, some of the weaker became mired in the muddy places. As soon as one was noticed missing a search of the creek banks was made but often it was too late and the animal had died and was left there. If, when found, there was still life, the procedure was to go to the residence, get a team of horses, a log chain or heavy rope, and with a loop around the horns of the creature, drag it to terra firma, where it was rubbed down and fed for several days. Often the exposure was such as to prevent recovery and the carcass was left where it had fallen.

In addition, anything dying on the home farm was hauled away to a distant wood. No one thought of taking the trouble to bury or burn dead animals as the laws required when the country became more thickly settled. The location of a decaying animal could easily be ascertained by the actions of the buzzards as they flew around in circles high above by the place, with some swooping to fill up and others filled, going up and away so gorged they sought a quiet place to rest. Frequently, when the scene was being enacted and we had missed a cow of which no trace could be found, we went to investigate and in a muddy place, mostly hidden by the bank and the shrubbery alongside, would be the remains of the animal we had searched for in vain and had gone by at a short distance without discovering it. Whether it

was because they became over-gorged, or, like the skunk, it was their only way of self-protection, anyone going near them stood a chance of having a gob of that filthy stuff spewed at him from a buzzard flying overhead.

The laterals of the two streams before mentioned almost converged in a well-wooded and limited grassed area, partly in Nemaha county and partly in Marshall county. There an Irish colony of immigrants settled in 1856 or 1857, built a church and christened it St. Bridget. From all accounts, there were more immigrants from the Emerald Isle taking part in the development of the state in its early stages than any other class. This was evidently due to the campaign then on to determine whether the Territory, on voting for statehood, would decide for slavery or against it. The South was sending all that could be induced to go in for voting purposes. To offset this, organizations were perfected in the east to locate there as many of the immigrants coming from Europe as possible. The Irish were particularly chosen to send there, believing their former serfdom in their own country and their longing for independence would induce them to vote against slavery.

There were no bridges then across creeks or rivers. To get to some places a traveler often had to go miles out of his way to connect with the rocky and shallow fording places. I was not over twelve years of age when the supply of corn meal became so low that it was necessary to replenish it. Usually my father took a team and wagon and several bushels of corn to the mill, but just then planting time was at its height and I was put astride the oldest and gentlest horse, with a bushel of shelled corn divided in a sack balanced in front on an old skeleton of a saddle, to Frees' Mill on the Nemaha river. It was less than eight miles due east, but to cross Turkey Creek, it was necessary to go up or down the stream for a fording place, which made nearly twelve miles of travel. Our old home was on the north side of Manly Creek, two miles from the Nebraska line and two miles from where it entered a larger stream, Turkey Creek, coming from the north and taking the flow of Clear Creek a few miles south of us. The Blue River was some twenty odd miles to the west of us and a short distance beyond that was buffalo range. Between the larger streams and their short tributaries was a high divide untenanted. Along this was a northern branch of the well worn old Oregon and California Trail, with the beginning of the northern branch at St. Joseph, Missouri, and the southern main trail at what is now Kansas City. The two met and crossed the Blue River at Guittard Station, now Oketo, Kansas. The Pony Express, with a beginning at St. Joseph, was on the northern route with a relay station to change horses just north of what is now Artell, Kansas, on what was known as the old Dave Smith farm. There were stations along this trail every twenty-five miles, consisting of a small store and a combined wagon

and blacksmith shop where a broken wheel or other parts of a covered wagon could be repaired. The proprietors of these stores purchased a limited amount of country produce to sell to the emigrant trains going by in the summer time, but trade was slack in the winters. Then there was no market for farm produce and their business consisted of a few simple necessities sold to the settlers and whiskey for anyone having the desire for it.

That well worn old California trail with its many rutted tracks was a magnet that drew settlers as near to it as possible in locating, but timber there had to be for them to make any progress. An example was my mother's folks, who were ferried across the river from Iowa to Rulo, Nebraska, where they had no thought of settling, but headed for the only road then leading across the Continent.

At Ash Point, seven miles southwest of the old home, the proprietor was a jovial and popular Irishman named Johnny O'Laughlin. He, too, used his preemption rights on a quarter of timberland at the junction of Clear and Turkey Creeks and sold it to an uncle of mine in order to establish the store. Before selling he had planted a half acre to apple trees which, after a few years, became the first bearing orchard in all the surrounding country, including that part of Nebraska nearby. His success in raising apples proved an incentive to others to plant orchards, and nursery salesmen from farther east made a good commission selling fruit trees. By 1900, every farmer had a bearing orchard for home use and apples to sell as well. On the prairie land, which, at first, was thought to have no value except for pasture, a flourishing orchard might be seen. But the hilly, bushy country of the St. Bridget territory excelled for size, color and flavor of apples. Soon the apple crops of the vicinity were more than a side issue of farming. Although not of large acreages, there were enough apples of high quality raised in the neighborhood to entice owners of city cold storage houses to come out and buy them on the trees in an orchard. But this revenue disappeared in a few years, when the moth that deposited the eggs made them wormy and the farmers neglected to spray to reduce them, as did the commercial orchardists. Now those old orchards are all gone and new ones have not been planted because the farmers hesitated about battling the moth, as was done by the commercial orchardist.

There was a German Catholic colony on Wild Cat Creek, a tributary of the Nemaha, north of Seneca, and a German Lutheran settlement east of us on the Namaha and on the creeks flowing therein. At an early date all the timbered land along the streams was occupied. Scattered Irish were in the majority, Germans a close second, with Scotch, French, and hardy Americans, who had pioneering experience east of the Missouri River.

A family from Indiana, named Brewer, with considerable worldly goods, was an early addition to the neighborhood. They located on Clear Creek three miles south of us, and brought with them a spinning wheel and a loom. The time for need of the spinning wheel had passed everywhere, as had the loom for general use, but for many years that loom operated by the Brewers gave valuable service to the whole community in the weaving of rag carpets and rugs. They also brought with them a number of high grade horses and cattle and a flock of geese, and had the means to engage a saw-mill to come in and make lumber. From it they built a large two story house and a barn. Andrew Brewer was also instrumental in getting the first frame school-house built in that section of the country. It was on a corner of his farm and was ever after the voting place of the township, which had been named Clear Creek. It was also the social center of activities in the nearby neighborhood, as well as was their home. Farming and stock-raising was conducted on a larger scale there than was common on account of there being twelve sons and daughters in the family to assist, ranging in age from the early twenties downward. Large families were prevalent in that period. Several other still healthy couples in the near vicinity were proud of families of the same number, and one couple felt quite superior with a baker's dozen. Divorce was unheard of at that time.

The death of one of the pioneers was an occasion to pay a last tribute to the deceased for his worth-while living, and funerals were largely attended. Cemeteries, at that time known only as graveyards, were often far away. But if the deceased had kindness, honesty and accomplishment to his credit, the funeral procession would sometimes consist of over a half-mile of farm wagons, with numerous horsemen at the rear. Even those from a long distance, with only a casual acquaintance, showed their respect by attending. The hearse of the time was also a wagon which necessitated slow going and added to the solemnity of the occasion.

Because the elders of the foreign colonists did not have much social contact outside their own circle, their old world ways and traditions remained with them for sometime. A few foreigners had an advantage in that they had come as young men or with their parents on that five or six weeks voyage across the ocean in the old sailing vessels of the period. To gain the wherewithal to purchase a home, some of the men had worked in the manufacturies of the east, others had worked in the construction of the many railroads that were then being built east of the Missouri River, and in different localities as hired hands on the farms. By their social contacts they were already well imbued with the American Spirit, which was for education, liberty, and progress. It is to them and their energetic American neighbors that Kansas owes her rapid advancement in education. Early, they built log school houses, the forerunners of "The Little Red School House," that later made the state famous.

To fully realize our advancement in beliefs and customs, it is only necessary to consider the billowing hoopskirts of our mothers, the unsightly bustles, and the unhealthy tightly fitted corsets of a later period. The wild Irish wakes, and funeral sermons that, instead of being consoling, brought tears to the eyes of the congregation and hysteria to the relatives, the condemning of the bereaved of both sexes to the wearing of mourning cloth, and the prohibition of all merriment for a period of a year. As late as the nineteenth century in some countries in Europe, the exhibition of much grief at funerals was considered proper. If the family did not feel equal to the occasion, what was termed "Public Criers" could be hired to assist. These were usually three or four young girls with excellent crying power and a flare for acting.

That these superstitions and customs are nearly obliterated is to our credit, but a summing up of history with the reformation and the chaotic lives of Martin Luther and John Calvin in the foreground, when men and women on both sides of the controversy were tortured on account of their religious beliefs, gives one the realization that, with all our advancement, we are only four hundred years from savagery, and much less than that if we consider our own historical and lamented Salem witchcraft episodes and the undisputed patriarchal rule dominating in families. Then, there were the unreasonable "Blue Laws" of the so-called Puritans that stood for so long on the statutes of Massachusetts. Some historians claim they held back civilization for many years. It all leads to the belief that our so-called civilization is yet but a light veneer to be watched over carefully lest it revert to that of the Middle Ages.

First libraries contained only the Bible, a few religious books, the McGuffey readers of the schools, and the much prized Ayers and Jaynes Almanacs that arrived once a year, with every other page lined with supposed funny stories and crude jokes. A slavery and anti-slavery war was going on and later a great Civil War, but the only news of it in our vicinity was by the "grapevine" route. As time advanced, a postoffice was established at a farm house on lower Clear Creek and one near the center of the St. Bridget settlement. Mail was supposed to be carried through tri-weekly from Seneca by a man on horseback, but with swollen streams in the springtime and snow drifts in the winter, it was nearly always irregular and often arrived in job lots. A German, who had acquired the trade of blacksmith in his native country, filed a homestead five miles southeast of us, opened up a shop on the place and I often traveled to and from there in the summertime, barefooted, with broken parts of machinery to be welded, and likewise made the tri-weekly trip to the three mile distant postoffice.

My first school teacher was my white-haired Grandfather, on my mothers side, by the name of McCaffrey. He lived with his

eldest son who had preempted one of the best farms on Turkey Creek three miles northeast of us. The school house was located on his farm. Another son owned the farm adjoining this and two more sons owned farms farther down the stream. Together, father and sons had accumulated considerable money with which to begin farming operations in Kansas. The two eldest sons who had worked in the steel mills at Pittsburg afterwards moved to Iowa to engage in farming. Grandfather had taught school in both states. He fashioned tall peaked "dunce caps" out of paper for the slothful in learning to wear, and made the wearer stand up in front of the school to be laughed at by the other scholars. There were some steel pens then in use, but if the supply became exhausted and a quantity of goose quills were furnished, he would fashion them into pens and they were proficient for the purpose intended. His teaching was of short duration for, on account of advancing age, he was obliged, in a few years, to give place to younger men. At that time he was considered the most learned man in the County, but his learning was little more than that acquired by high-school students of today and lacking in the many new subjects that have been added as time advanced. In his last term, although rigid in enforcement of rules, he would go to sleep in his easy chair when there was a lull in the hearing of classes, and the pupils, mostly his grandchildren, would romp about the room at a rate that was scandalous. His immediate successors were farmers of the vicinity with a limited education, who, in the dull winter months, appreciated the work on account of the salary attached.

The beginner was obliged to learn the alphabet so it could be rattled off both forwards and backwards without a break. The multiplacation table was set forth in the book in a square page in figures from one to twelve, and this also had to be completely memorized forward and backwards until it was firmly indented in the memory. Much of the studying by pupils was done at home as they progressed, and those with parents able to help got along much faster than those whose parents had been denied that opportunity.

Grammar, now known as English, was the stumbling block for both teacher and pupil, but I am inclined to believe it was more the fault of the text books than of the teacher. Often, the more he tried to explain the different parts of speech, and where to use them, as directed by the book, the more bewildered the pupils became. A short poem learned did more in helping some to distinguish parts of speech in the long sentences we were obliged to "parse" than anything in the text books. It is as follows:

Three articles are a, an, and the
A nouns the name of anything,
As school or garden, hoop or swing,

Instead of noun the pronoun stands,
Her head, your face, my hands,
Adjectives tell the kind of noun,
As great, small, pretty, white or brown
Verbs tell of something to be done,
To read, count, laugh, or jump and run.
How things are done the adverbs tell,
As slowly, quickly, ill or well.
A preposition stands before a noun,
As in, or through a door.
Conjunctions join the words together,
As men and women, wind and weather.

For some time before that little log school house was replaced by a large frame building, the influx of settlers was so great that it was literally packed. Soon after the new one was built, the enrollment was close to forty pupils, ranging in age from four years to twenty-two, with some of those in their early 'teens in the same classes as those in their late 'teens and early twenties.

An old fashioned spelling school was held every two weeks, preceded by declamations and reading contests, after which there was a recess for play so that those coming from a distance might become acquainted with local talent. After recess came the debating with the choosing up of sides, the same as in the spelling contest. To encourage thought and expression, many were chosen with a ruling that all were obliged to get up and say something when called upon, even though it consisted of only one sentence. The questions argued were necessarily limited to the commonplace, but were not as rural as, "Which is the mother of the chicken, the hen that laid the egg or the one that hatched it?" But some presumed wit would suggest it occasionally when the subject of the next debate was being considered. Other schools of the period were conducted in much the same manner.

It was customary, at that time, for teachers on the last day of school to give a treat of candy and nuts. The sack containing it had to be a large one of cloth, as pupils absent at other times were all in attendance that day. Several days before the term expired, the larger scholars would find out from pupils at whose home the teacher boarded whether the treat had been purchased and stored there. If it had not, or if the teacher was stingy about the amount furnished, there was woe of some kind awaiting him. If the treat was skimped, the remarks he heard were anything but complimentary, and if none at all showed up, he had something worse coming to him. In extreme instances, a group of the older boys put him astride a fence rail, and with a couple holding him on, carried the rail around the school yard. This custom of rail-riding never took place in the home school but an attempt was made with one teacher. He was a young man

just graduated from an eastern college, whom the family doctor had ordered to go west for a year and rough it. Far from being sickly looking, he was an all around athlete and introduced baseball in that vicinity. There were enough boys and men attending the school then to make two competitive teams. He was an artist with a pen and specialized in drawing birds in black and red ink. Birds in trees, birds poised for flight, a mother bird on the nest and the male on a twig nearby for protection and facing his mate with an expression that seemed to say, "What can I do for you?" He organized a writing school class which he taught one night in the week for twenty-five cents a lesson. This was not a success for him financially, as a brother and I and two boys and a girl of another family living near us were all that attended the full term. The distance and stormy weather forced some to drop out, and it is doubtful if we would have attended so regularly had we not all five been able to go together, their home being in the first half mile on the way. Instead of the candy treat, he spent his time before and after school hours in drawing birds to be given to the pupils as a remembrance of his associations with them. My brother and I valued ours highly, but they were blown away in a cyclone that later partially wrecked our home. Some of the older pupils, larger than the teacher, thought he should have contributed the usual candy treat, and at the last recess they told him they were going to give him the customary railride for default. His answer, as he backed up against the school house and squared his shoulders, was, "Come on boys!" But they did not come.

Not all the early schools were like this one. In those with small enrollments there was not much excitement. But the Brewer school south of us, with about the same enrollment, acquired an unsavory reputation on account of the many pranks played on any teacher who incurred their displeasure. When ever the term in our district was shortened to the early winter months, on account of lack of funds, my parents made arrangements for my board during the school week with an uncle who had sold his farm on Turkey Creek and had then purchased one adjoining that school, and I enrolled there.

My first experience was after a young teacher had been so annoyed by the pupils, and this included both boys and girls, that he gave up and returned to his home. An older brother, a farmer, who had conferred with the school board and guaranteed he would finish the term in an orderly manner, had just come on to take charge. As the pupils entered on his first day, it was noticed that a fair-sized bundle of second growth hickory switches and a lighter bunch of the willow kind, stood end up in a corner near his desk. The tough hickories were intended for the older pupils and the willows for the younger ones, as a reminder of what to expect should they fail to obey. Seeing them kept the larger boys from indulging in anything not according to rules and requirements. Two grown girls were the first and only ones on which the hickories

were used and their offence did not justify the severe whipping administered. They had discovered a large box of window putty underneath their desk at the rear of the room and worked and fashioned it into representations of people and animals, and, by passing them from one pupil to another, they soon had them in general circulation. The grotesqueness of the images was such that for a time the whole school was convulsed with laughter and the teacher could not control, nor find cause for, because when he went among those having them, they were quickly concealed. In the end, several were found and the two girl perpetrators were made to stand together before him while he struck each alternately over the shoulders with such violence that the limber end reached burningly down their backs. It appeared overdone but he had evidently lost all control of his temper and was only thinking of what the school had done to his brother. By his actions afterward he showed that he regretted the severity of the punishment and succeeded in obtaining the good will of the majority of the pupils and finished the school year with good order. He was credited with giving his pupils more advancement in learning than any of his predecessors.

There were no women teachers at that time but the change has been so great since then that they have replaced the men except as superintendents and principals in high-schools and teachers in colleges. Here is added one more tribute to the McGuffey readers that are now being generally acknowledged as the first great educators. Henry Ford started an investigation as to their worth when he began a search for the full series to place in the replica of his old home at Dearborn, Michigan. Beginning in the primary additions, their teachings were suggestive of the value of kindness, honesty, industry, temperance, politeness and thrift. "Mary's Lamb," the "William Tell" and the "George Washington Hatchet," stories will live in the memory of many future generations. The fifth and sixth readers, with their sketches from Shakespeare, and poems from the world renowned authors of the period, and other informative articles were welcome additions to the scanty libraries of the pioneers.

I attended the Brewer school two terms, spending weekends at home. Often, on Monday mornings, as I climbed the steep hills beyond the creek and came out on the dead grassy hilltop, I would suddenly come close to a couple of deer before they saw me and jumped and ran away. They were driven out of the country soon after. Deer are wary creatures when hunted and difficult to distinguish at a distance if standing still as they are much the same color as the dead grasses and the decaying leaves of the trees. Some of the younger generation stalked them without success but Andrew Brewer, head of the Brewer family, succeeded in getting at least two every winter.

The uncle with whom I stayed had married a Brewer girl and when they went for a few days visit with acquaintances at a distance,

I was sent to the Brewer home. They were what was termed "Indiana Hoosiers." He was a rangy well-built man and his wife a kindly motherly woman and an excellent cook. Her corn bread and white flour biscuits were unequalled, but she was a failure at making the raised white bread and she said she had long since given up trying it. Even with two nearly grown daughters to assist, it was a heavy task to prepare meals, for there was usually company. Often there were thirteen of us but no bad luck ever occurred to any of us on that account.

It was there I had my first and only experience in sleeping between two feather ticks or mattresses. Like others, the family had a reasonable supply of blankets and other covers, but not enough for all. With the weather outside below zero and that in the room close to it, the sensation of getting between two feather ticks and warming them with body heat makes cold chills run up and down the spine. One misses the blankets next to the body and soft covers to tuck around the shoulders. Upon being married, two feather ticks were given my wife and me, one from each side of our respective families, but we never tried sleeping between them and when bed springs and felt mattresses came into general use, they were given away to people who could not afford to buy the modern articles.

Securing pure water for drinking and cooking purposes was a serious problem with the early settlers. Often it was carried in buckets or hauled in barrels from some distant spring. Putting down a well was a laborious and long drawn out task and not undertaken until living conditions were made comfortable. Houses were erected in the seemingly most convenient locations, usually on somewhat elevated sites, and sometimes in places where there was no underflow conveniently below. If a hole dug proved deficient in water, the only alternative was to try at a more distant location. The process was to start a circular hole five or six feet in diameter, with one man doing the digging and two men operating a double cranked windlass to pull up the dirt excavated in large buckets, generally the half of a sixty gallon emptied coal-oil barrel that had been sawed in two. I was several years old when the job was begun at the home place and it created a lasting impression on my memory; the regular let-down and take-up for the man below, the men perspiring at the windlass above in their shirtsleeves as they hauled up the dirt and dumped it on the ever increasing mound nearby, with the contents so heavy that it took their united efforts to carry it. At twenty feet down a solid layer of rock four feet thick was encountered and a specialist by the name of Mitchell had to be called upon to do the blasting through it.

As mentioned before, a large majority of the settlers in the community were immigrants from Europe and knew little of gunpowder, as guns were prohibited them in the countries from which

they came. Few of them had ever had guns and they preferred trapping the wild game to experimenting with a gun. A powder finer than gunpowder and much lower in price was used in preparing for the blast in a well. A round hole an inch in diameter and about a foot in depth was made by hammering on a drill. In this a fuse was inserted, the necessary amount of powder put in, and the hole above solidly tamped full with fine clay. The timed fuse had not been invented then and, in order to give time for the man in the hole to be windlassed to the top in the bucket before the powder was ignited, a small trail of hay leading to it was lighted at the farther end. Then there was a hurry-up signal by violently jerking the rope attached to the bucket for a quick windlassing of the man up and a scurrying of all three to get behind the house for safety from the small rocks that were thrown high in the air. The same method was used to split in halves large logs for working into rails and posts, but the fuse was lighted directly as there always were standing trees nearby to get behind quickly and take refuge from the flying splinters.

Forty-two feet down another layer of rock of the shaley kind was encountered. After repeated blastings, hope for getting through it was given up on account of so much of the blasting force escaping through the crevices. The blasting, however, did loosen up the rock so that water trickled through to a depth of three feet, proving there was a plentiful supply of water below. The well was "walled up" but was never a good producer and later another well was procured some distance away. Walling to prevent cave-ins was done with suitable rock, generally hauled from some nearby quarry. Pumps were not then available, those were the days of the "old oaken bucket."

The blaster received superior wages for this work. He had a close call at our well while at work on the shaley rock at the bottom. The hay leading to the fuse at the bottom had been lit as usual. When some time elapsed before there was a report, he concluded that in the absence of a draft, the fire had gone out, as it often had before, and he was let down to investigate. When two-thirds of the way down, he spied a smoldering spark and there was a frantic signal for an uplift. As he clambered out of the bucket the explosion came. There was not time for the three men to seek the usual safety behind or in the house. Fortunately, the depth prevented but a few small stones from being thrown over the top and these without force enough to do bodily harm. Had he gone on to the bottom before discovering the flame he would, at least, have suffered a severe shaking up.

An example of how far energy, thrift and perseverance went in those days in securing a home was seen in that of a family from up-state New York soon after the St. Joseph and Grand Island Railroad began carrying passengers. They got off at Seneca, the

County Seat, to inquire about homesteads, to find that all had been taken except a rather rough forty acres near our place that everyone considered not worth placing filings on. They decided it would be a home of their own, which they had not then been able to acquire, and they signed up for it and got conveyance to our place early in the springtime. A partly wooded ravine coursed through the middle of it, with small tracts of bottom brushland alongside, and there were not more than ten acres of upland that was worth cultivation, but there was enough rock on the hillsides for building purposes. The family consisted of the parents, two matured sons, a daughter nearing that age, and a younger son. They evidently arrived with little money, for after purchasing a cow and a few chickens, they did not invest in a horse. All worked to build the house and although it was not fanciful, it contained three large rooms, was in a bank with a southern exposure, was lined with the rock nearby, and was extended far enough above the dirt in front to permit small windows and a roof of sod. But they were obliged to get along with clay floors and wooden benches and tables like those coming before them had used.

The summer was so far advanced then that it was too late to grow any crops that needed time to ripen, but they all worked at clearing and spading up the small patches along the ravine and succeeded in raising enough potatoes and other vegetables to supply the summer needs and enough to store to last a year. In the meantime, the father and the two sons worked for nearby settlers for hire that they might buy the other necessities of life. They were fortunate in not having to dig a well, as the home was situated near another ravine with a cool and never failing spring of water flowing. They raised a small patch of buckwheat, which, like potatoes, is a quick maturing crop, and the family was adept at working with it as it was planted extensively where they came from. The father was an expert with the flail and the mother could make cakes that were delicious. Our home was a mile farther away from school than theirs and we usually stopped there on cold mornings to warm up in the wintertime and accompany the young folks on their way. When we arrived the griddles were always warm, with batter left, and an invitation from the housewife for us to "try a buckwheat cake." They were luxuries to us because we had never before tasted them.

The next year a horse was purchased and, with a horse loaned by a neighbor, the ten acres were put into cultivation. From then on, they prospered. The two young men "worked out" as it was termed and the father took care of the home place. It was not many years until the 120 acres adjoining were added to the 40. They had a new frame house nearer to the spring and alongside a public road that had recently been located, and all the equipment necessary to operate. Although hired men worked long days then for low wages, the thrifty ones saved enough in a few years to buy some of the

upland, which was still selling as low as three dollars an acre, with the best of it nearby small towns, selling for six dollars an acre. Near the County Seats it was higher in price.

I was a good-sized lad when the grasshoppers made their historical invasion of the state. They were a different specie from those now operating at times in Western Nebraska, South Dakota and Eastern Colorado, and much larger. According to reports, the same kind now make regular visits to the farming regions of Peru in South America, apparently coming from the mountainous district. There they are called locusts. They came to Kansas unheralded and all at once, in such numbers as to obscure the sky as would a large cloud, and ate everything that was still green. After they arrived there was considerable rush to get whatever of the corn that had not been affected by a partial drouth, and cut up for fodder, and everyone worked hard at it. Bandana handkerchiefs were soon made wet with perspiration and those first laid aside to dry in the fields were soon completely riddled by the hoppers, as was any other sweaty garment that was laid aside. Reports were circulated of their gnawing holes in pitchfork handles until the handles were unfit for use, but I cannot vouch for the accuracy of that statement. It is, however, safe to believe anything one hears about the Kansas hopper year and all the seemingly unreasonable things that occurred there during the cyclone period that hit the state somewhat later.

When the hoppers had eaten their fill it was nearing winter, and, knowing their life was soon to end, they began to look around for a place to deposit their eggs for the perpetuation of their kind. Or perhaps it was what is called animal instinct that guided them. Large turtles bury their eggs high up on the banks of some stream in small deposits of sand that have been left there by the springtime floods, for the sun to hatch them, but that was not the place for these hoppers. They chose the hard-packed dirt of doorways, barnyards and roadways for their work. Nature had provided them with a somewhat lengthy proboscis at their nether end that must have been very tough, for when the proper time came, all the hard trampled ground was literally covered with the big, busy female hoppers, sitting down with front feet up and boring and drilling their level best. It was slow work but when the hole became about one-half inch in depth and one-eighth of an inch in diameter, something like one hundred eggs were deposited in each hole and covered. Early the following spring the young hoppers hatched out in numbers as large as some of the national debts, and for a while, the much debated question was, Shall we sow and plant, or shall we not? The Ayes won by a large majority, with a few saying it would be useless to plant. Upon getting their wings, the young hoppers all flew away and those who planted were rewarded with a crop.

The old adage about a farmer's work being from sun to sun originated in those days and was the rule. In the rushing days of harvesting time, a short rest was taken in the middle of the forenoon and again in the afternoon and a prepared lunch was brought out

by the women of the household. The majority of farmers kept from fifty to one hundred head of cattle and, with all the hay then being handled with pitchforks and hauled to the feed yards at home, that work was of long continuance. We had eighty acres of heavy bottom hay land, the farthest a mile away. A part of it was so thick and tall that when being cut, all that could be seen on the opposite side, as the machine went round the land taken in, was the heads of the driver and the horses. We commenced on this in the latter part of July. Then there was a field of one hundred and sixty acres of good prairie hay land the same distance away. After the hay on the home-owned lands had been put up, those thinking they had not yet enough, commenced on the non-resident speculators' prairie land farther away. This, through the early summer months, was anybody's range for cattle and would not yield hay like that not pastured, but by going over enough of it, considerable could be obtained. Sometimes there would be three or four machines operating there within a short radius. A majority of the farmers were satisfied with cutting around a small tract and, when that was cut out, go on to another.

I was operating the mowing machine there one day when a man, with more acquistiveness than good judgement, appeared on the scene and cut around a tract so large that there was nothing of value left in that vicinity. When my father heard of this he told me when I had finished where I was, to go inside the square the man was working and cut out a reasonable sized portion. This I did, but it was the start of a feud between the heads of the families that lasted long afterwards, with several costly lawsuits over other differences. But the enmity between the heads of the two families was ignored by us youngsters, excepting short periods when it took on a fresh impetus. The other family was our nearest neighbor with four children about our own ages, intelligent associates at school, and all-round good sports.

Our haying period always lasted from the latter part of July until the middle of October. When we boys were young, two men were hired for the work, the regular hired man doing his part for sixteen to eighteen dollars a month, and the extra man receiving a dollar a day. I, being the oldest, started at the work at the age of sixteen, and the following year, when my brother Ed was fifteen, we took over the work entirely. We took pride in excelling the hired men who had preceded us. I was slight in build but had watched the method of one of the best hay pitchers in that part of the country who worked regularly at the home place. His method was not to depend entirely on the muscles of the arms but to make the body assist. With the fork securely fastened in the hayshock or in the load in unloading, the handle is pushed down firmly over one knee, using it as a fulcrum, and the end inserted underneath the opposite knee. Thus, by slightly crouching the body and using this leverage, the load is raised above the head and elevated with the legs more than the arms or back. With a little practice, all the motions needed can be gone through quickly but that way of pitching hay is hard on fork handles. The man I

learned the trick from and one other were the only ones ever seen to pitch hay that way. The other, a young married man with two hundred pounds of bone and muscle, helped soon after I became married and had a house and barn of my own. He, however, did not depend upon the factory made handles but arrived with a home-made handle twice the size of the average. He could cover up two men in the mow of a barn when pitching off the load.

The first year my brother and I worked together we succeeded in averaging six loads a day of approximately one and one half tons each until a hundred loads were stacked. This included heading out and tying down the stacks for it then was very windy in Kansas. Occasionally, in the latter part of September, the wind would blow so hard every day for a week that it was impossible to handle hay in the daytime. To keep up with the machine, we were then obliged to haul at night. Heading out a stack to a narrow top and tying it down was a slow process and proved costly if one was obliged to buy rope to hold the heavy rotted off posts that were used to hang down the sides. There was no cheap wire of any kind then. Fortunately for us, a brother of my father, who had worked so long and hard for the government at Fort Leavenworth that he was unfit for much manual labor, was staying with us then and he furnished the material used to tie. We would give him a small bunch of fine hay and, sitting in the shade, he would soon fashion and twist hay rope so strong that two men could not pull it apart. He had learned this in haying at the Fort and told us of some of his experiences. From what he said about methods of haying used there, more attention was paid to the nicety of appearances of the stacks than to the expense. After the hay was pitched as high as a man could reach, a platform was built alongside the stack to receive it and another man stood there to pitch it on up, thus building the stacks far up into the air. A huge bulge was put on the stacks several feet from the bottom. My uncle worked for a time as a stacker but proved a failure when he attempted to get a bulge at the proper place unless someone kept going around the outside of the stack to tell him how to place the outside layers, as the boss stacker did at the Fort.

His description of the boarding house where the men ate is worth repeating. When the bell rang for meal time there was a rush to the long table where the food was served and all the men ate quickly for the rule of the house was that when the first man finished all food and dishes were to be removed from the table. There he had acquired the habit of fast eating, of which he was unable to break himself while I knew him. He died at the home of a County resident long before he had lived the years of expectancy attributed to a normal man, with the symptoms of over-worked digestive organs. The thought comes that this method of feeding was false economy. If a man failed to get enough at one meal, he would be so hungry that he would make up for it by eating faster and more at the next.

At that time we were putting up from one hundred and fifty to two hundred tons of hay yearly, all in long stacks, close together, in a yard used for that purpose and fenced around when the haying was done. In the winter, at feeding time, one of us boys would throw the hay from the outside stacks over the fence to be carried out by the other in forkful bunches and distributed among the one hundred head of hungry cattle awaiting. When the outside stacks were gone, the fence was moved close to the next ricks. We preferred doing it this way rather than hitch up a team, load, haul, and scatter out, as the yard was well sheltered by the timber and the constant work kept us warm on cold winter days.

One year when the stack yard was nearly filled, a Frenchman by the name of Chas. Azier, who bought and shipped cattle, happened to come out our way and remarked about the nicety of our stacks and asked who built them. I was rather proud of their appearance although I had never succeeded in getting a bulge like my uncle tried to show me, and considering it a compliment for myself, promptly answered, "I did." Imagine my consternation when his next question was, "But who pitched to you away up there?" I did the pitching in the field but not until then did I realize that my brother had the hardest task. Azier, however, did not know our scheme of stacking, which was when the height became too great a strain to the pitcher on the load, the remainder of the load was dumped off for the bottom of the next stack to be built.

Azier had a rival in cattle buying in Jim Brawner of Artell. In September of each year cattle buyers from the corn-belt of Missouri came out and purchased the large steers in the vicinity and drove them back to their feedlots, but Azier and Brawner were the principal buyers for the dry cows and heifers that had become fattened on the grass. Before the St. Joseph and Grand Island Railroad was put through, they were driven to Missouri River markets, and after that, shipped by rail. Each farmer who sold to them was required to send along a man or a boy for gathering the cattle and driving them to the nearest railroad station, which was always exciting. The cattle of that time were a mongrel breed, fairly docile unless they became irritated, and they had a liking for home quarters. Until we got far out into the prairie country, first one and then another would make a break for home and if one succeeded in making the timber line it was lost for that time. The buyer always came out to superintend the work and we were glad when it was Brawner for then none were lost. A twelve or fourteen foot cattle whip was as much as the average person could manage, but Brawner, who was a large man, wielded a whip eighteen feet in length with a heavily loaded handle to balance it. With the lash held in a loop by his lower fingers, he would unroll it with a quick swing overhead and could draw blood with the buckskin pepper if that punishment was needed. He was so accurate with it that when a large cattle or horse fly lit on one of those in the rear, he would trail the lash and then throw forward so the popper would remove the fly without injuring the animal. If one of them made a break for

home, he would ride alongside on his fast and well-trained horse, popping that whip in front of it, with an occasional pop on the nose, until the animal was glad to turn and again seek refuge with the on-moving herd where he would bring it in on the gallop. When one made a break for home, the others had to be pushed forward rapidly, otherwise there would be a general stampede.

Brawner, at one time, with helpers, drove a herd of hogs to St Joseph, eighty miles away, but the shrinkage was so great that he did not try it again. On the ranges of the west where the herds are larger and wilder, and any unusual noise like the popping of a whip, would be liable to cause a stampede, the cowboys used their lariets as propellers. There the cattle fear it even more than a whip for most of them remember it being thrown ahead and over neck or horns as they were suddenly thrown to the ground for branding or other purposes.

Every year cattle feeders from Missouri came in to buy up the two year old steers and drive them to their home feeding grounds. One year ex-Governor Butler of Nebraska got in ahead of the Missouri buyers. With his tall silk hat and the nicest buggy we had ever seen, it reminded us of pictures seen of the Lord Mayor of London. His brother, Jim, leading a saddle horse for the return drive, was with him and they bought all in our vicinity. By noon one day all were enclosed in our home lot ready for a start to the Governor's farm somewhere near Central City. I had a good pony and with a young man living nearby, agreed to help in the drive and the night trip home for one dollar and fifty cents. That would not seem much to the youth of today but it was big money to us then. Jim also had engaged a man of his own age, which made four of us. After dinner, the Governor left for home and we started the drive but our cattle kept breaking for home by ones, twos and threes, so often that it was nearly sundown before we got a start on the prairie to the northwest. The contrary ones were intelligent enough to know that their safest place was in the plum thickets where we were obliged to tie up our horses and sweat routing them out on foot. We made but three miles in Nebraska by dark and luckily found a flimsy looking corral large enough to hold them. The proprietor was a deaf and dumb bachelor and he had undoubtedly been deprived of the sense of smell also, for when the biscuits were cooking, the waft of spoiled lard put in them came to the corral two hundred yards away. The others ate sparingly of them but, hungry as I was, the coffee was all I could get down. Two of us were obliged to stay up half of the night to watch the cattle lest they break out of the corral and, naturally, Jim and his cronie took the first half and left us the dreary last half. Breakfast was the same warmed over biscuits but even then they refused to go down.

Somewhere near the Platte River a large pond was encountered and, as it was warm for September, the herd made a successful break

for it to get cooled off. The bottom appeared so muddy that we hesitated about forcing our horses in to drive them out lest the additional weight would mire them down, and all we could do was crack our whips and yell at them until they got good and ready to get out. All I had to eat since noon the day before were two apples out of a hatful Jim had retrieved from the only orchard seen on the way and the pangs of hunger were a new experience. We arrived at the Governor's private mansion about one o'clock in the afternoon. In addition to the family and help on the farm, there was company, two maids to serve and the service on silver said to have been taken from the State House when the Governor left there. The only wonder was that I did not gorge enough to burst something internally for I did not then know that after a long fast one should eat slowly and carefully. There was considerable talk of bringing impeachment proceedings against the Governor before his term was out for irregularities in office, but nothing further came of it. Anyway, irregularities in office were common then. At home we had a State Treasurer, elected from our own county seat town, in the penitentiary for getting away with a big bundle of the taxpayers money--and, according to the newspapers, they still do it in places. Whatever else may be said about ex-Governor Butler, he was not miserly inclined and kept his money circulating where it was most needed.

I often thought afterward that the constant heavy work done by my brother two years younger than I, as we worked together, would impair his health in later years, but it seemed not to have injured either of us. Then two inches taller than I, and for several years after attaining manhood, he remained quite thin and had a sickly appearance, but later, when I saw him at his business home in Junction City, Kansas, he enjoyed reasonable health and must have weighed at least two hundred pounds. Possibly his making a greater success in business than at farming had something to do with his appearance. Some idea of the strain of the summers work may be realized by comparing my weight at the beginning of the season, when I was twenty-one years old, with what it was at the close of haying. At the beginning I weighed one hundred and thirty pounds, which was normal. When haying was over I weighed only one hundred and seventeen, somewhat fagged out, but healthy. It was then I decided to take a real vacation, and my first. When I returned after a month of it I weighed one hundred and forty and had changed so in appearance that friends had to take a second look before they recognized me. My experiences and observations on that trip will be given later.

There was a lull in pressing work between haying and corn husking but the latter, though trying on the shoulders and back, did not require as heavy muscle work. This began early in November and often was continued until near Christmas time. Because of the days getting shorter, huskers were in the field when the first day-

light began to appear, sometimes there waiting for it so early that the ears on the stalks could not be seen. Horses were fed and harnessed before breakfast and during the interval, on calm mornings, it was a common practice in the neighborhood to give a few war whoops and listen for answers. Faint ones came from as far away as a mile in the immediate vicinity. But the loudest answers came from the Brewer boys three miles south of us on Clear Creek. The call or cry was a long drawn out "Yay-hooo" with the full power of the lungs and constant practice gave improvement. Whether lack of lung power caused the closer calls to be fainter or the calls from Clear Creek being more easily heard on account of terrain was never determined. But had the States been putting on hog-calling contests at that time, some of us would have had a fair chance of taking the grand prize.

On those calm frosty mornings there was a melody hard to describe in the rattle of the many wagons as they went over the rough frozen roads on the way to the fields, and in the noise made by the husked ears of corn as they were hurled against the high "bang boards" necessary to keep them from being thrown over. Heard from afar and coming from half a dozen wagons, it furnished appreciated music for the ears of the farmer. The method of opening and stripping the husks then was as primitive as some of the other early methods of farming. A small seasoned hickory peg five inches in length was whittled down to a sharp point at one end and left blunt at the other. Near the middle a notch was cut around it to hold a finger strap. A stout strip of leather was fashioned with holes in the end. The leather was then doubled and the holes pushed over the pointed end of the peg to rest in the notch made to receive them. With the leather measured to the correct length this left a loop to fit over the second finger of a man's hand. Some of the country blacksmiths were making flat iron pegs with holes in them for a leather string to be inserted for a finger loop and the iron turned up slightly at the outer end. These were soon in general use and a few years later a patented peg of much similarity was being manufactured and put on the market. The trouble with the wooden pegs was that it took too many motions to strip the ear. A husker did well if he hauled in fifty or sixty bushels a day working from daylight until dark. With the improved hook now in use and strapped around the hand, the ear is stripped and jerked out with one motion.

At first the poisonous rattlesnakes were numerous. When binding the grain from the self rake where the prepared bundles had lain for a day or more, occasionally when a harvest hand was stooping over to gather up and bind, the warning rattle of a snake that had gone underneath to evade the sun's rays made him suddenly decide he did not want that particular bundle until he had killed the snake. I have several times actively retreated when loading hay upon hearing the warning rattle when the pitcher on the ground

threw one up in a forkful of hay. Bull snakes six and seven feet long were common but they were not generally killed on account of their principal diet being gophers, chipmunks and field mice. If one of them was found with a large bulged out place around its middle and in a lethargic condition, it was a sign that gophers and mice had become scarce in its hunting ground and, as a last resort, it had managed to catch and swallow so large a bull frog that it was taxing its digestive organs. When a rattlesnake seemed overlarge through the middle, it was a sign that it was a mother who had her young out of the den for an airing and had given them a danger signal and opened her mouth so that the little rattlers could seek safety inside. Upon killing an old one of this particular shape the proper thing to do was to insert a tine of a pitchfork through the tail end and crack it around as one would a whip to shake the baby rattlers out and kill them.

An active and courageous dog is a constant menace to snakes and, once bitten by a rattlesnake, has learned a lesson never to be forgotten. It will circle around the reptile, barking ferociously to secure attention, and when there is a safe opening in the snake's guard, will suddenly pounce upon it, grab it in the middle and shake it so violently that in less than a minute there is a benumbed snake. Deprived by the shaking of a chance to bite, it is soon easily killed.

The following experience may seem overdrawn to those not having lived in a part of the country infested by rattlesnakes, but it is nevertheless correct, even to the smallest detail. My father had added an eighty acre tract of heavy bottom hay land to the home place and in haying time the snakes were especially numerous near a corner with a small weedy and bushy area adjoining that had not been cut or burned off for many years, possibly not since a division fence had been put there. My brother and I finally decided there was where the snake dens were located and we mowed, raked, and bunched it one morning. It was worthless for hay but the cutting and bunching showed the dens plainly. In the afternoon, with a spade and long sticks for the killing, we started to dig out the snakes. Only one could dig, the other was obliged to watch and kill those coming in from adjacent surroundings. When the job was done we had killed forty-eight rattlesnakes. Naturally, a large majority of them were small, some with only one rattle and a button. Others with more and those matured had the full sets. The size and coloring of the older ones would have classified them as beauties in anything but a rattlesnake. It was getting well toward dusk when we completed the job and while on the way to the house, a mile away, if I saw a small stick on the road or a last year's corn stalk, it seemed to take on the spots and colors of a rattlesnake and I would make a sudden jump sideways. The half day's work did not affect my brother as badly as it did me, as he was of a less nervous and imaginative temperament. I could tell this story in that environment and it would be believed but not

after moving to a prairie country. Even those who did not tell me outright that it was untrue and were polite enough to say nothing, showed disbelief in the face. I have often noticed these facial expressions of disbelief plainly showing on the younger generation when some elderly man is comparing the hard work of the early days and the compensation received with that of today.

Although I had some narrow escapes, I was never bitten by a rattler. One time when my brother and I, both in knee pants and bare-footed, were racing across the prairie after some cattle, I heard the warning rattle just ahead in the grass. I was so close that it was impossible to stop soon enough so I made a flying leap to get over it but in going over, the snake struck me on the side of one leg. Upon stopping, a small blood spot like that caused by a pin prick showed where it struck and we both decided to run to the home of an uncle three quarters of a mile away. To our home it was a mile and a half. When out of breath we stopped to again examine the leg, but the blue-black color peculiar to the entrance of a poisoned fang had not shown, so we decided the trifling wound had been made by a sharp pointed blade of grass.

A liberal dose of whiskey was always given internally as an antidote to snake bites and a small supply of it was reserved for that purpose by the majority. Those opposed to the whiskey cure were said to have used a couple of weeds called snake weeds, a remedy used by the early Indians. Just what the formula was I have forgotten. A small brother was bitten later and I watched the methods closely as my parents treated him. They poured about a half pint of whiskey down his throat and, as soon as possible, poulticed the wound and the blue poisoned flesh around with the halves of the bodies of chickens, just killed and still warm, entrails included. Mother also sucked at the wound and spat out what she got there. As to which did the most good in effecting a cure I could not at the time decide, but the whiskey soon made him unconscious and relieved the pain he would have otherwise had to bear. No one died of snake bite in our vicinity, but several who could not receive treatment promptly lost a finger or a hand, and in one or two cases, the mind was slightly affected for a time.

Whiskey was then considered a cure-all for ailments of all kinds. In some cases it probably helped, but in others it was a detriment rather than a cure. Measles then was more severe than now and hot whiskey given in frequent doses was supposed to reduce the fever by bringing the rash to the surface. The use of whiskey then was as common as "bleeding" with leeches for the treatment for practically all ailments and diseases in the earlier times. There was usually but one doctor in the County Seat towns then and they had a limited knowledge of the uses of medicine and its effects and knew little about diagnosing the symptoms of a patient. They made so many mistakes that most people preferred to use the old home

remedies that had been used by their forefathers. Later medical science became convinced that blood letting and whiskey, instead of being beneficial, were injurious as they weakened the patient.

Another inconvenience was the myriad of mosquitoes that convened for a period of time in June. In the daytime it was too hot for them and they rested in the grass until night. If the wind blew even slightly they did not go abroad but if the evening was calm they would come out early and make life miserable for man and beast, sometimes as late as ten o'clock at night. At first there was no screening to protect doors and windows and they roved through the house at will. On such occasions fires of old hay were started surrounding the house, with green grass or weeds constantly kept on top to make a heavy smudge or smoke. To clear them out of the house it was necessary to go through a couple of times carrying some of this burning smudge in an old pot or can. The smoking out process had to be carried on until the night became cooler, after which they disappeared, only to come back again when climatic conditions were favorable. In a few years a light cloth that would let the air in and keep the mosquitoes out could be purchased, but it was several years before the wire screening for windows and doors came into general use.

A short time before the mosquito pests disappeared for the year, or soon afterwards, a fever called Ague would become prevalent. Many persons were immune but those who contracted it had something to remember for a long time. Some had chills and fever every day, others every other day, with the teeth rattling until it became an effort to talk. This generally lasted with a patient about two weeks. The cure prescribed was liberal and frequent doses of quinine. The malady seldom proved fatal but left the patient so weakened that it took a long time to fully recover. There were patent medicines called "Ague Cure" that could be purchased in drug stores but it was surmised the principal ingredient was quinine. In later years the myriads of mosquitoes disappeared and so did the Ague Fever. It was similar in many ways to the fever described as so prevalent in Panama before this government concluded the mosquitoes were infected with the malarial germ and transferred it to humans. The conclusions were evidently correct because when a majority of the swamps were drained and the lesser stagnant waters oiled, the fever abated there.

Boys with hunting instincts indulged in coon hunting to its full extent before they were old enough to be trusted with a gun. The sport was limited to rabbits and raccoons, with a couple of dogs to do the trailing and run the game to cover. The refuge of the cotton tail rabbit was a tree decayed part way up on the inside, with a hole for entrance near the roots.

When bunny entered, a long slim sprout of some kind was made jagged or pointed and pushed upward in the opening below. This crowded the rabbit upward as far as it could go and left fur on the stick. Thus, the exact position of the rabbit was determined. A hole was then chopped in the tree below where it was lodged and it was pulled out by hand.

The real sport was in hunting of raccoons. This usually took place in the fore part of the night. We kept two excellent coon dogs for this purpose. If the coon sought cover after the chase on an upper limb of a large tree, which was often the case, someone was compelled to climb up and poke it off and down for the dogs to wrestle with. After corn ripened in the autumn the young matured coon's principal feeding place was in the cornfields skirted by trees having no holes in them and of a limited size. There they were easy prey as it was but a short climb to shake or poke them down. But if the coon succeeded in entering its home, which was usually high up in some large tree where a limb had been broken off close to the body and the rainfall had entered and rotted out a place in the main body, the coon was safe there as few cared to take the chance of poking it out and escaping unscratched.

Those two dogs enjoyed the chase so well that they often went out by themselves after nightfall. When they had succeeded in treeing a coon, the peculiar noises they made were a signal recognized and a slightly younger brother and I would get out of bed and go to help. Raccoons were over plentiful that fall and, after working hard the day before, the frequent night calls became monotonous and the dogs often were forced to wait until daylight for aid. On arriving on the scene one morning, we were very much surprised to find three fat coons lodged in small trees not very far apart. We were late for breakfast that morning as it took some time to shake down the coons for the dogs to kill separately.

The killing of a coon is a slow process for two dogs and there are few that can accomplish it alone, and not at all if the coon is able to maneuver into water. The dog will be either drowned or obliged to let go his hold. A good-sized shepherd cattle pup who happened to be along the morning the three coons were captured made the scene laughable. It avoided the danger zone until the coon dogs had the victim well controlled. Their actions were always systematic. One worked for a strangle hold of the throat and the other for a grip on the heart. The constant snarling and growling of the contestants, for the coons made as much noise as the dogs, so excited the pup that it decided to take part in the battle and its choice, whether for safety or habit, was the rear end and preferably the tail. As the tail wriggled around, the pup would become confused and part of the time he would be pulling the tails of the dogs, creating a comical appearance indeed.

Coonskin furs, that later when made into coats became so popular with both men and women, sold for a mere pittance then--not enough to compensate for skinning and curing. A banker in Seneca who came from the opossum country of the south would take one or two of the young each week at a dollar each, for cooking. Once I persuaded my mother to roast a couple. The aroma as they cooked and the flesh when eaten appealed to the taste, but arriving at a leg that had been severed from the hind quarter reminded one so much of that of the hind leg of a dog that one forgot the first impression. Very few northerners would relish an opossum or a coon as a delicacy. So, too, a majority reared far from the seashore care little for clams and eels.

Trapping of mink in the winter brought the best returns. Their furs sold for two dollars each when properly cured. Their habitations were along the creeks where a spring from the bank came out a little above the surface of the water. In walking or skating on the ice these could easily be discerned. As the warm flow kept a small space at the edge of the ice from freezing this was almost a sure place of catching them if a steel trap was concealed under the water there.

I had a chilly experience on account of these traps early one spring. Foreseeing a thaw, the mink traps were supposedly all taken up sometime before. In walking along the left bank looking for some cattle that had not come home, I heard a rattle of chains below and realized it was that of a trap that had been overlooked. Upon investigating I found a half-starved and emaciated coon with one foot caught in a trap. The bank there was about four feet straight down to a heavy crust of ice that had not yet been thawed by the warmer current in the middle of the stream. In order to unfasten the mooring of the trap, I was forced to slide down the bank and work standing on the narrow ledge of ice. The three dogs who were with me were barking furiously above and anxiously waiting for me to toss up the coon. Unfortunately, as I made a move to do this, the ledge gave way and the trap, coon and I went into the water, with the excited dogs jumping in almost on top of us. By this time, the mongrel pup had matured and he also took the leap but, as usual, kept safely away from the fighting end of the coon. As the water there was only neck deep I finally managed to get free of the tangled mass and out on the opposite shore. Cold as I was, I waited to see the finish of the struggle before starting for the house and dry clothing, a half a mile away.

My father had acquired enough timberland along the creek which gave us boys two miles for our own hunting ground. A short tailed bob-cat arrived there and made this two mile strip it's rendezvous for a couple of years. These cats are much larger than the wild long tailed variety although both kinds have long sharp

claws much larger than those of a coon. The raising of chickens then was profitable as a side line on farms and we kept several hundred. On account of the nearness of timber, our barnyards were more frequently raided by this bob-cat than any others but complaints from farmers living farther up or down the stream were sometimes heard. Crouching behind a haystack or some hazel copse nearby, it would watch its chance. If a fowl came anywhere near, the clamoring noise made by the scurrying flock for shelter would arouse us and a chase was on, but the cat always had too great a start. Once, as I was standing not farther than a rod away from a mother sow, lying on her side and nursing her pigs, there was a rush and whir so close by me that I did not realize the cause of it until I saw the cat make a grab at one of the pigs, but missed it. By that time, the mother was up and charging at it, making the peculiar noises of those animals when their fighting instincts are aroused for the protection of their young.

Often those two hunting dogs would go out to the woods on their own accord, work their scent until a hot trail was discovered, and run the bob-cat up a tree. The barking of the dogs varied with the object or animal treed and we soon learned to distinguish when the cat was treed. If this happened in the daytime someone at work would quit his task, get a gun and go out to try for a kill. But before he arrived at the place indicated by the noise, the cat had watched for its chance and when this came would jump to the ground and run until the dogs were so close that safety demanded another tree climb. This performance was repeated so often that the follower with the gun could not catch up and would return in disgust. In the daytime the chase by the dogs often continued for half a day as the cat let its pursuers up and down the creek, unless by some maneuver on its part, the dogs lost the trail. For a man to go out at night was useless as he would be unable to see the cat or to shoot it even though he did catch up. The bravest of the two dogs came home several times so badly lacerated that it was a week or more before he was able to go out again and finally came home with wounds so deep that he did not recover. The cat was never killed in that vicinity and must have decided to move on to more secluded surroundings.

During the stay of the bob-cat and prior to its killing of the best dog, a panther went through that part of the country, although upon first hearing its plaintive cry we could not account for it. This occurred on one of those delightful nights of early summer when the whip-poor-wills were whooping their best, for which the country was noted. The family, including a hired man, were sitting outside on the porch between nine and ten o'clock, enjoying a full moon which added to the beauty of the evening. Suddenly a faint noise was heard resembling somewhat the crying of a child,

coming from the timbered area on the creek a half-mile southwest of the house and gradually increasing in volume and changing alternately from the cry of a child to that of the pitiful cry of a woman lost. By this time we were all on our feet and considering making up a searching party when the hired man, who read much of wild animal life, said it was a panther. By that time it was passing up the timber not many rods west of the house, with the noises becoming louder and more weird. I cannot describe the feelings of the others but cold chills went up and down my spine and I felt as though the hair on my head was standing straight up. The two hunting dogs who had been lying on the ground near the house must have come to the same conclusion as we humans, that it was a creature out of the ordinary and too big for them to tackle, for they left their resting places and came onto the porch slinkingly, with their tails between their legs, to stand in the corner nearest the entrance of the house. A few days later we learned that it was a lonesome panther who had escaped from a wagon show several miles southwest of us and was seeking a way to the wilds. Later we heard it had stopped at a farm earlier in the evening several miles away and had lunched on a sheep.

In the early '90's, Kansas received a considerable amount of unwanted publicity due to numerous cyclones in the eastern part of the state. Several small ones wrecked farm buildings in our region and for three years they were frequent over Kansas but did not appear there again until 1906, when a disastrous one struck our County seat, Seneca, and leveled or blew away many of the houses in the residential district. Our township experienced the first one, recorded on the evening of May 30, 1880. It first struck about two miles west of us and zig-zagged down the timberline to southwest of the house and then took a northeasterly course. When the noise began we were occupied with the evening meal in a frame kitchen that had recently been added, but fortunately, the family moved from there to the more solidly built next room before the kitchen was entirely blown away. The next move was to the larger log structure, and just as fortunate, as the roof, ceiling and everything in that room that was not weighted also went. What had weight was tumbled and tossed around with indications that had anyone been there, he would have been hurt severely. A younger brother and I had hurried up the stairway leading to the attic of the larger addition, where we boys had our sleeping quarters. The nights preceding had been somewhat warm and to procure more air, a half window had been taken out at the south end and laid aside. This we hurriedly pushed into place, but there was not time for fastening. Grabbing a comforter from a nearby bed to keep the wind and rain from coming in where a glass was missing, we both braced our shoulders against it. With the shingles being stripped from the sheeting overhead by the wind, the rain coming through in a fine choking spray, and

our feet slipping on the floor, and incessant flashes of lightning and deafening claps of thunder that could be heard in spite of the roar of the storm, our situation can well be imagined. It is doubtful if we would have been able to endure had we not thought of reaching an arm through where a glass was out to get a clamp-hold on the extended eave outside. The storm evidently lasted but a few minutes but at the time it seemed much longer. How near it came to blowing away the roof overhead and everything underneath was realized when it was over. The rafters that had been spiked to the top logs on the west side had been lifted from their moorings by inches and fractions thereof. The need for action overcame fear at the time but it came later after viewing the wreckage. I became cyclone-shocked and it was several years before I was able to fully control my nerves upon the appearance of a black looking cloud.

Where the storm traveled through the timber, the tall cottonwood trees without many limbs were not ravaged severely, nor were the willowy young trees of all kinds. But the towering oaks and elms with their many extended branches were broken off at the base or torn up by the roots and tossed to the ground. Frequently those near the center of the whirl had fallen so that the great tops almost met. It did many freakish things, principal of which was the manner it treated the water-drawing process of the well. This was the old-fashioned hand-dug kind, walled with stone, forty-two feet deep. It was but a few feet south of the first built log cabin and furnished with a frame, wheel, and rope, and two old oaken buckets, with, of course, one at the bottom full of water. These were found all in a heap about three feet from the well. In order to accomplish this the whole thing must have been taken at least forty-two feet straight up and then let almost directly down again. The survival of two motherless pigs that were being hand cared for in a box between the well frame and the smaller of the log houses was miraculous. When it seemed safe to enter the house, the wailing ories of both could be heard but they were not visible. A search revealed one in the home-made family cradle, the other in an old-fashioned four-doored kitchen cupboard, lying on its back on the floor beside the broken dishes, with all four doors closed. Seemingly, the box they were in blew through the south door and deposited them in their places, and when the roof was blown off, the wind continued on its splintering way and the cupboard doors closed afterwards.

Another freak was the disappearance of a combined billfold and receptacle for silver, containing two ten dollar bills, three dollars and a half in silver, and a twenty-five and ten-cent issue of the paper money of the period. During the summer time, the door going from the smaller house opened inward and met the door opening from the larger one. For want of other space, nails were driven into the logs back of them and some of the better clothing hung there.

Among them was my father's best coat with the billfold in an inside pocket. When the storm abated, the silver was found all in a pile just north of the building, the twenty-five cent paper currency a few rods away, hanging to a tall weed that had been stripped of its branches. But the coat, the billfold, and the two ten dollar bills were never recovered. A large eight-day clock that had been on a shelf lay on the floor face up, showing that it had stopped at 6:30 P.M. but when put back again and started, it operated as before. Five houses in the path of the storm were more or less damaged, but were not completely blown down on account of their being built of logs or heavy stone. The casualties were a woman with a fractured leg, and a boy out herding cattle, who was blown from the prairie to lodge in a bushy ravine half a mile away, with only some bruises, the loss of a few teeth and a period of unconsciousness. But a large new frame school house, recently built in the district to replace the old log school house, was completely wrecked. Small broken portions of it were found scattered as far away to the northeast as seven miles. What was left of it on the ground was auctioned off for fifty dollars. That school house had more than a monetary value. It had been built after much animated discussion and several postponed meetings as to site, and immediately the old fight for location came to the front. The result was that the next one was built about a mile from there and left renewed animosity among the neighbors. There had been more intense and prolonged family feuds over school house sites in Kansas than over any other one thing.

A description of early pioneering would not be complete without something of the prairie fires of the time. There was always a surplus of dried grasses when winter came, short and wiry on the level uplands but of a larger growth on the rolling lands adjoining the streams. The settlers soon learned that by burning off their ranges late in the springtime the luscious blue-stem would grow more abundantly. There was always a balmy week in the fore part of May ideal for this. Then a farmer would take the initiative by starting a blaze near his home. This was always in the early night and secretly, as it was known that many fires would follow and if it could be proved who started the first one, he could be held liable for any damage done thereafter. In a short while, the residents up the creek a mile felt justified in setting out a fire, ostensibly to protect his home, but, in reality, to burn off cattle range for the promotion of blue stem grass. Soon others did likewise and it was not long until there was a solid wall of fire on the prairie north of Manly Creek, where all the homes were located. Seeing what had been done there, residents living on the bottom of Clear Creek started their fires and before midnight there would be a wall of fire ten miles long up and down each creek. To heighten the effect, those who also pastured in

the prairie south of Clear Creek would slip over there and touch a match to the dried grass, and there would be three walls of fire slowly burning. This would continue for several days and nights if the calm persisted. Occasionally an unexpected veering wind would come up and sweep a fire across the high prairie divide between the two creeks, over the prairie to the north and south of them and endanger the not well protected buildings of residents far away. When this occurred there was exhaustive fire fighting and sometimes a dwelling or out-building burned. There was loss of only one life by fire and that was of a man trying to protect his home after a fire set to burn raked up cornstalks had ignited the grass nearby. The lurid effects of those fires at night is beyond description: A blaze low down, dark smoke above, going straight up, and gradually verging into other colors, with the lustrous sky above, a scene that no artist could depict in its entirety.

To stop a head-on fire coming toward a residence it must be seen far enough away to give time to plow a couple of furrows and start what is termed a "backfire," to be carefully watched until it had backed away to meet the swiftly on-coming fire. As the fires came near together there was a roaring sound and a surge of the low-lying blaze toward the higher one with both blazes of equal height. As they came together on the prairies, sidefires were fought with large grain sacks, held in the hand and the other end dipped into a pail of water taken along. In fighting a sidefire in the bottom land where the dead grasses were taller, it was so hot as to necessitate the attaching of the sacks to the ends of long poles or fork handles. How exhaustive and long continued fire fighting can be is well illustrated in an incident that occurred near our home.

A head-on fire coming in the night missed the home place, but left a side-fire of half a mile in length, three quarters of a mile away as a menace if the wind veered enough to start it in our direction. My father, a hired man, a brother and I went out carrying the usual sacks and buckets of water to beat it out. We were making good headway when it was noticed that we were almost out of water. It was so far to the house that much of what had been gained would have been lost before the water arrived if sent for there. My father remembered a draw nearby, apparently dry, that had a few old buffalo wallows and sent us two boys to one of them with buckets, on the possibility of there being some water there, while he and the hired man continued with what they had left. We found water, but just a trace of it, and had to scoop out a hole in the mud for it to seep into before we could fill our buckets, with numerous tadpoles in the water. After dipping the smutted sacks in it for sometime, I realized that I was in about the same condition as the buffalo hunters who ate the dog, but it was water I needed, and taking one of the buckets then nearly empty,

I raised it up and, closing my teeth to strain out the tadpoles, took a good drink.

Farmers then kept about the same number of hogs as they did cattle, and some of them more. Often these, becoming fat in the extreme heat of the summer, made it necessary to get them to the market. This required getting up at three o'clock in the morning for loading them in a wagon, with additional sideboards to keep the hogs inside. Usually there were twenty-five to thirty to load at one time. When this occurred, several neighbors were called to assist and the start made to market ten or twelve miles away before daylight.

One morning, just as an uncle and I and several others were starting from his place on the road to market, his team became frightened and ran away, throwing him from the seat high up on the wagon to the ground. After he was carried into the house, it was decided a surgeon was needed and I was sent for the only reputable one in a town twenty-three miles away. The ride there was made on a pony I had and the jolting was hard on the body, but I fared much better on the return trip as I rode with the doctor in his buggy and led the pony. The doctor found the bones in the neck had been dislocated without fracture of the vertebrae. Ether was administered and pressure was used to put the bones back in place. My uncle finally recovered his health but his neck was stiff ever after. In order to look sideways he was obliged to turn his body completely around.

There were many runaway horses in the mongrels of that period who had inherited the traits of their wild ancestors. We owned one of the worse in the neighborhood, a large and powerful animal, although badly deformed. We christened him "Bunkum," but the hired help and the neighbors called him "The Sunfish," because of a deformity in his back which stood up like that of a sunfish. He was so strong that he could drag his mate with him until the mate became excited and made a heroic effort to keep pace. He ran away on the initial breaking and intermittently afterwards with whatever he was hitched to scattered along the trail. As a rule, I was the driver and had several narrow escapes as I always held to the lines as long as possible.

The most serious of these was when, after scattering a load of hay for the cattle, he took a notion to create some excitement. When he started I sat down on the left hand side of the rack and braced my feet against a cross-piece so that I could pull better on the lines. My efforts, however, were futile, as the team kept running around in that two acre lot until they became exhausted. The lot was fenced with heavy posts set in the ground and rails spiked to the posts. When we finished up, I was still

in the position noted but was fortunate in that I was sitting on the left side of the rack, as the right side was completely demolished from striking the posts as we went around and around.

At another time he had one of his tantrums, I had loaded some porkers at a neighbors farm in the dark of the night to take to market, and had about given up stopping the team when a last effort in pulling on one line succeeded in bringing on a headon collision into the butt of an old strawstack.

At another time, I was jogging along in an empty wagon when old Sunfish, as he was then universally called, and a mate got a start on me, throwing me in front of one of the wagon wheels, which struck one shoulder and passed over my chest. Fortunately, the ribs held, but in striking the shoulder, the iron tire made a gash in my chin which left a tender scar. This was so conspicuous and embarrassing that as soon as possible I hid it with a Van Dyke beard.

Again, when I was driving him with another lively horse to a mowing machine, my father said he would take the team and machine as he wanted us boys to do some heavier work around the barnyard. We tried to dissuade him from driving "Old Sunfish," but failed to do so. He was over sixty years then and, like many other men of that age, his alertness and strength had been ebbing for some time but he had not yet realized it. The mowing was being done out of sight of the house and it was no great surprise when, about the middle of the afternoon, we saw him coming in on foot, presumably to have one of us get on a horse and look up the team. Upon arriving, the condition of his clothes made him a sorry looking object. His back was bare except for a few tatters of a shirt and the seat of his trousers was missing, his suspenders all that was holding. Of course, this created a laugh but he took it good naturedly. Upon being asked how it happened, he said, "When I found I could not hold them, I tumbled off backwards and as I fell, one foot caught in the lines." When someone said, "How did you get it loose?" The answer was, "Oh, I just kept kicking." Like some others, he had acquired the dangerous habit of tying or buckling the long lines together and letting them drag behind the machine thus, instead of singly.

A mowing machine and sulky hay rake were the two most dangerous farm implements with which to have runaways, as being thrown in front of either meant serious injury. They were the most difficult to ride for control of horses on account of there being nothing on which to brace the feet for a strong pull on the lines, as was found in the majority of other implements and machinery. An elderly man in the neighborhood in a runaway was thrown in front of a self-rake machine while cutting grain and was badly mangled by the sharp guards of the sickle bar and no doubt would have been killed had not a pocket knife he was carrying lodged between two of the sickle

sections. That stopped the motion of the sickle and all the other parts of the machine and made it such a heavy drag on the horses that they stopped until he was rescued.

Several times I have tumbled off backwards from a mowing machine or buggy rake when the horses got beyond control. Once on a hay rake I came near not tumbling soon enough for immediately afterward the mules attached ran the thing astride a wet shock of hay, which broke the tongue in two. The half next to the rake stuck in the ground, and the momentum when the doubletrees broke sent the rake in a whirl as far as twenty yards away, where it landed upside down. Had I been on the seat at the time I would have accompanied it.

I have often marvelled at the many seemingly miraculous escapes of those working on farms. A fatalist would declare their ordained time had not yet come, and a believer in signs and omens would ascribe it to their being born in the right sign of the Zodiac, or under a lucky star, while a disbeliever in both would say the accidents were caused by lack of foresight and recklessness.

As families grew in number and stature, there were demands from the young for amusements of a higher order, and they formed cliques to promote them. Nearly every family had a level and sanded croquet ground, and on week-ends there were tournaments. A few became so proficient at the game that they could begin at the starting point and by loose croqueting on a thrown ball, often make the whole round of the wires and stakes without missing a shot. Dancing, although it could not be indulged in as often, was the long looked for social occasion. Our associations were mostly with those whom our parents visited after locating. There were ten families of them, some nearby, others seven miles away on lower Turkey Creek, and two fourteen miles away on the Nemaha. The majority were of Irish descent, but included one each of French and Scotch lineage. All had prospered alike and were building two story houses of frame or stone and commodious barns. When either was finished, usually in the autumn, there was a big house or barn warming therein that always lasted to the "vee small" hours of the morning.

A majority of the religious sects at that time looked upon the dance as an invention of the devil and if they accidentally came in contact with one, would close their eyes and go away in double-quick time. The ministers preached from the pulpit on the iniquities of the round dances, the waltz, and the schottish. Besides the dances in the new houses and barns when they were initiated, a dance was often arranged when a loft became emptied of hay. But during the long winters, each family gave a dance at least once and invitations were sent to those far away in the grapevine way. The family giving the dance were hosts, even to paying for the

orchestra, which was usually composed of a first and second violinist and an organ of the time. For several days before the affair that was a busy household, with the women folks baking buns and stacks of pies and cakes. The attendance, counting some friends visiting here and there and those invited, often numbered over fifty. In the houses there was not room for over eight to twelve couples to occupy the floor at the same time, and numbered tickets were given to the young men by the floor manager. When their turn came, they selected partners, but before the evening was over there were frequent chances for the ladies to choose partners. At midnight a plate of lunch was served and a couple of hours spent in conversation and in singing the old songs of the period. Besides the hosts, there were always some of the heads of other families present, and sometimes they could be induced to dance the old country Irish lilt, or breakdown, as it was then generally termed. The music best fitted to it was St. Patrick's Day in jig-time, the Irish Washerwoman, or Roary O'Moore. Only one couple could perform at a time on the floor in this dance. They began standing facing each other and danced backwards, and then forwards, with courtesies before they met, swung once and a half around, first with right hands joined, then with the left clasped, then with both hands, always reversing their positions on the floor after the swings. In the courtesies the ladies might limit themselves to half time but gracefulness counted to their credit. The gentlemen, however, were required to do full time except in the swings, and to introduce as many intricate steps as possible. The object, besides the show of dancing, was to see which of the two could continue the longest, and it usually was the woman. With some of the audience clapping and cheering the men and others encouraging the women, the contests were exciting. The James Craney, before referred to, and a lady of about his age usually were awarded the prize, which was only applause.

The Quotillion was the name of the young people's dance, with its origin in the aristocracy of Old England, but we changed it to "The Quadrille." Now it is known as the "Square Dance." Although we had changed the name, we still clung to the methods of the English, which were slow time, orderly and courteous. The caller always began with: Salute your partners--lady on the left, and after parting from a partner in grand right and left, and meeting her in the set a courtesy was in order. New music for the dance was constantly being perfected here, but the old English tune of "The Girl I Left Behind Me" was the popular one. Even "Pop Goes the Weasel" was called for occasionally. "Captain Jinks" was also a favorite, probably on account of the rhythm given by the caller as he sang out in accord with the music: "First lady lead to the right - swing Captain Jinks of the Horse Marines--and now the boy that bakes the beans--and now the boy that's in his teens--and now the dude of the ballroom." The call for the gents was: "First gent to the right--swing Lady Jinks of Madison

Square--and now the girl that's very fair--and now the one that bangs her hair--and now the belle of the ballroom." If he could create a few smiles by substituting other calls that matched the music, it was always done. The call of cheat or swing was often demanded and if the dancers went at it with gusto, it created a lot of merriment. The routine is the same as in Captain Jinks but the call was cheat or swing, and, through courtesy, the cheating was usually left to the ladies, although if a gent had once been cheated, it was his privilege to get even with the lady that cheated him if he could. When a young man going around the inside circle danced before a lady, expecting her to meet him in the swing, and she suddenly turned and swung her partner, it was embarrassing. His only recourse was to glide across the floor to the bars of the music and swing his own partner. Then, if she was prepared and both went through the motions gracefully, the cheat lost its value. Otherwise there was laughter.

The only rough appearing dance was "Old Dan Tucker"--"short and fat, just as red as my old hat"--it was danced only once of an evening. Old Dan was an extra and was doomed to do jigtime in the center of the circle or sit while those in the outside performed the other evolutions of the dance in half time. His chance came when the caller sang out -- "Grand right and left, and Tucker mix in." If he could secure a partner when the call came--all promenade, someone else became Old Dan. There is where the rough part came in, as he and another struggled for temporary possession of some fair dancer. Compared to the way of dancing in olden times, the "square dance" seems to have lost some of its charm. To an onlooker it appears as a dizzy jump-around.